

Implementation Plan

1. Cover memo

Department of Contemporary Dance Year of appraisal 2015

To: Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning
From: Faculty Dean
Faculty of: Fine Arts
Date: December

Please find enclosed the finalized Implementation Plan for the Department cited above as part of the academic program appraisals process. This Plan was duly discussed with:

- The Department Chair
- The Dean of Graduate Studies (if applicable)

As mentioned in the Concordia University Academic Program Appraisals Manual, 5th edition revised, the Faculty and Department will follow-up on this Plan in two years, when prompted by your office.

Sincerely,

Faculty Dean's name Rebecca Duclos

Faculty Dean's signature



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2. Summary

The Department of Contemporary Dance assists students in developing leadership and collaborative skills related to choreographic research methods; expertise in the area of dance technique and performance production; and the ability to create a research-creation environment that supports, sustains and encourages an individual's potential to move into the professional field.

Concordia University is one of the few universities in Canada that offers courses in choreography and creative process as well as a comprehensive approach to contemporary dance that teaches technical skills, theory, creative thinking, self-direction and studio exploration. The Bachelor of Fine Arts, Major in Contemporary Dance emphasizes the discovery and development of the creative capacity and the technical potential of the individual student, and seeks to develop choreographers with experience in performance.

The addition of a third faculty member in 2015 has ensured contact with a full-time faculty member through all years and in all three core areas of the program: technical training, creative process and choreography. The department has access to the extensive teaching and creative research experience of its full-time and part-time faculty members. Full-time faculty are involved in new media/technology and performance; new modes of collaborative and inclusive creative practices; and cross-disciplinary projects (incorporating acting, voice, circus and dramaturgy, for example). Funding has been awarded to both large team research and individual projects; graduate supervision is ongoing in areas of new media and dance and cross-disciplinary performance.

Key Recommendations

In order to build on the department's strengths and to address some of the challenges, and as an accompaniment to the recommendations made by the DAC, the EEs, and the UAC, the dean's office offers the following specific recommendations. Key points are outlined below and in the table on the following pages.

One primary area to consider is the department's curriculum. Revisions may be needed as a result of changes in the faculty complement as well as developments in the field or the university's strategic priorities: for example, linking to a faculty-wide health and wellness initiative. Different teaching expertise may be available or required since the last modifications were made. Any plans to develop a graduate program should also be discussed, including the department's ongoing work on the joint performing arts MFA program. The department is encouraged to include part-time faculty members in the curriculum revision process as well as in other facets of departmental life.

Given the department's size, and in order to further increase the scope of the curriculum, the department is encouraged to consider incorporating Visiting Artists as a way to further inform students about professional opportunities, both nationally and internationally. The additional exposure to professionals working in the field would be hugely beneficial for students. The presence of Visiting Artists from diverse traditions and backgrounds might in turn assist with the department's desire to increase its enrolment numbers.

For additional recruitment efforts, the department should consult with the office of student recruitment, and in particular the Fine Arts student recruitment officer – perhaps starting with a visit to the department’s facilities and a class or two. Recruitment efforts could begin with a review of the department’s strategy to reach CEGEP and U.S. students. The addition of an early February Open House incorporating an early round of auditions could bolster application numbers.

The performing arts departments have jointly requested a review of the administrative structures they share, taking into account similar performing arts units at other universities. The dean’s office agrees and is already working with the departments on assessing current staff descriptions and the division of labour. Also to be considered is the use of shared performance spaces. It should be noted that in order to maximize the spaces currently available, creative scheduling, for example on weekends, in spring or summer intensives, or other lower-use period might be required.

To best support students while they are engaged in such a physically demanding program, the department should contact the PERFORM Centre and Department of Exercise Science to see what collaboration might be possible. These units will have expertise in the areas of nutrition, injury prevention and physical therapy that could be shared and be mutually beneficial. Other areas of expertise, typically outside of the department’s domain, such a grant writing, transitioning into professional practice and project management might be accessed via the student success centre or departments in other Faculties.

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3. Recommendations

The Faculty Dean is invited to include a numbered list of recommendations for improvement, as well as a rationale and implementation schedule (an Excel spreadsheet is also available by request to the Appraisal Coordinator).

Recommendations	Prioritized timeline for completion	Responsibility	Dean's comments and resource implications
<p>1. The department should engage in a period of curriculum review. Issues to be explored include: flexible content delivery; alternative production models; introduction of a capstone course; a student handbook; peer-to-peer mentoring; standardizing student assessments and pedagogical guidelines; regular cycling of elective courses; and the addition of new specialized training courses; and the curricular role of such successful initiatives as Studio 7, FOFA Gallery, and 60x60 performances. The department should include part-time faculty in discussions and should thoroughly assess the scope of changes as well as any resources required.</p> <p>Rationale: It would benefit the department to open the communication lines between all parties in discussions about curriculum planning, pedagogical approaches and objectives of the program. Creative ways are needed to cover the full depth and breadth of the subject matter; to ensure that student productions are an integral part of the curriculum; prepare students for life outside the university; and to clarify expectations across the department.</p>	2016-17	Department Curriculum Committee; AD Academic Affairs	Facilitator, Academic and Student Affairs, is a resource

<p>2. The department should work to better include and communicate with part-time faculty members. The department should work to improve community relationships, and to synchronize ideas about the department's goals. This can include activities from curriculum committees, to departmental council, to biannual get-togethers.</p>	<p>Going forward</p>	<p>Department Chair; Department Administrator</p>	
<p>Rationale: The DAC, the EE, and the UAC all support relationship building with the part-time faculty.</p>			
<p>3. The department should also consider a trial use of Visiting Artists to expose students to a wider variety of professionals working in the field nationally and internationally. This would also support the department's desire to increase the depth and breadth of the curriculum.</p>	<p>2017-18</p>	<p>Department Chair; Dean; AD, Academic Affairs</p>	
<p>Rationale: Students have expressed an interest in increasing their exposure to professional choreographers.</p>			
<p>4. The department should consider means to improve access to the Le Gym studio space, in collaboration with the dean's office and the Associate Director, Recreation.</p>	<p>2017-18</p>	<p>Department Chair; AD Facilities;</p>	<p>Discussions are ongoing between the Associate Director, Recreation, and the AD, Facilities</p>
<p>Rationale: There are currently numerous interruptions by Le Gym users when Dance classes are underway. Efforts thus far have not improved the situation. Maintaining good access to this space for studio classes is critical.</p>			
<p>5. The department should determine how to invest in the process of developing a graduate program. The department should discuss and confirm its commitment to a joint MFA program or propose an alternative means of launching graduate studies in performance.</p>	<p>ASAP</p>	<p>Full-Time Faculty; departments of Music and Theatre; AD, Academic Affairs</p>	
<p>Rationale: External Evaluators have expressed second thoughts regarding the MFA in Performance Creation. The proposal</p>			

<p>should be discussed by the department, before the LOI is submitted to the provost's office.</p>				
<p>6.</p>	<p>a. There should be a review of the administrative structure supporting the three Performing Arts departments, using the staffing structure of comparable multidisciplinary performing arts units at other institutions as a benchmark, as recommended by the UAC and EEs. The dean's office will work to support the collaboration between the three departments.</p> <p>b. This review should cover an assessment of current staff job descriptions and the division of labour, particularly as relates to the new curriculum and productions.</p> <p>c. This review should also cover any possibilities for creative scheduling in the performance spaces shared by the three performing arts departments. Perhaps including weekends, intensives, or blended approaches.</p>	<p>Winter / Spring 2017</p>	<p>Department Administrator; Chairs of Theatre, Music, and Contemporary Dance; Director of Administration, Office of the Dean.</p>	<p>This same recommendation appears in the Music and Theatre implementation plans.</p>
<p>Rationale: Administrative support has been identified as a priority issue by the DAC reports and EEs for the departments of Theatre, Music, and Contemporary Dance.</p>				
<p>7. The department should reach out to the office of student recruitment and in particular to the Faculty's own Student Recruitment Officer to discuss needs. An invitation to the Recruitment Officer to visit the department's facilities and a class or two would be a good first step leading towards building a comprehensive plan for CEGEP student recruitment.</p>	<p>Rationale: Numbers of applications, acceptances, and registrations in the Department of Contemporary Dance can be</p>	<p>Going forward</p>	<p>Chair, Student Recruitment Officer</p>	

<p>improved. Resources exist at the Faculty and university level, of which the department should take full advantage.</p>			
<p>8. Contact the Department of Exercise Science and the PEFORM Centre to see how collaboration might be possible on those nutrition and injury workshops the department has planned, as well as to discuss what kind of resources might be available to serve the students in the dance program. Other workshops are possible with the collaboration of the Director of the Student Success Centre. Topics include grant writing, transitioning into a professional practice, and project management.</p> <p>Rationale: The department has expressed a need for services and support that the university might already have the resources to provide. This should be fully explored before other options are considered.</p>	<p>Winter 2017</p>	<p>Chair; Director of Administration, Office of the Dean</p>	