

**ACADEMIC FACULTY INFORMATION FORM**  
For the Period September 1, 2016 thru August 31, 2017

Name: Cynthia DuFault      Title: Assistant Professor      Department: Theatre & Dance

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**I. TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS**

**A. Courses Taught**

FALL 2016

DANC 385 Special Problems: Technique (4 enrolled)  
DANC 112 Beginning Jazz Dance (27 enrolled)  
DANC 311 Dance Composition 1 (17 enrolled)  
DANC 234 Intermediate Ballet (24 enrolled)  
DANC 421 Modern Dance III (8 enrolled)  
DANC 441 Modern Dance IV (4 enrolled)

SPRING 2017

DANC 385 Special Problems: Technique (3 enrolled)  
DANC 395 Dance on Camera (13 enrolled)  
DANC 235 Intermediate Ballet (20 enrolled)  
DANC 222 Modern Dance I (20 enrolled)  
DANC 195 Tap Dance (26 enrolled)  
DANC 325 New Repertory (12 enrolled)

**B. Procedures Used to Evaluate Teaching**

In order to refine courses and teaching practices as well as provide students with better learning experiences, I felt that it was important to consider the use of different evaluation formats to distinguish which has the greater outcome. The following three formats were used for the 2016-2017 school-year:

- **Class Discussion Format:** At midterm and during the final week of each semester, I conducted a group feedback discussion with students, asking them to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the course. The midterm discussion enabled me to respond to the needs of students currently enrolled in the course. Midterm and final discussions helped students recognize and investigate their assumptions in conjunction with others in the class. It also helped students develop skills of synthesis and integration, and it seemed to have initiated new appreciation for continuing differences among students. I believe that this format was very useful for course refinement, while also demonstrating regard for the experience of the students.
- **Provost Format:** At the end of the fall semester, students filled out the provost evaluation during the last day of class. The following is the overall rating accumulated from all classes: 86% student response was excellent, 14% student response was good, and 1% student response was missing.
- **Self-Derived Format:** It was suggested by a colleague that I create my own evaluation, so I researched questions that could greater specify course implementation and instruction. The evaluation included the following areas: plans instruction, implements the lesson, motivates students, communicates lesson, demonstrates knowledge of the curriculum, sets high expectations for student achievement in accordance with needs and abilities, maximizes time on task, integrates materials and methodology, provides specific evaluative feedback, manages the classroom, and interacts with students. The following is the overall rating accumulated from all classes: 84% accurate/consistent, 15% satisfactory/most often, and 1% fair to unsatisfactory/not often.

Additionally, on the days of the evaluations, I asked students if they understood the significance of filling out evaluations and learned that many did not. I felt that it was important to assure them that evaluations were not only effective in improving classes and instruction but they ultimately benefit fellow students and the department as a whole. Furthermore, I asked them to take the necessary time and be thorough when explaining their opinions. Resulting, I received noteworthy comments and ideas for coursework.

When reflecting on my courses, I considered what I hoped to have accomplished in each class and how well the class met these goals? Such reflection helps to better assess the following: student reactions; my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher; what specific teaching behaviors led to the higher or lower ratings; the relevance in areas where students rated me lower and what led to lower ratings; and one or two targeted items for improvement for future classes.

In comparing the provost evaluation with a self-derived format, I concluded that no matter how specific the questions, the rating percentages were still about the same. And, no matter how much I tailored the questions for the class, through the progression of the semester, students had addressed many of these questions through discussions and within the course work. Furthermore, the self-derived format required a greater amount of effort to design and calculate, and the provost evaluations were convenient, efficient, and accurate. In the future, I will continue to address course-tailored questions during the open feedback discussions, and next year, I will only use the provost evaluation.

### **C. Other Observations Regarding Teaching**

**Strengths:** My overall goal was met in assisting student-dancers who implemented recognizing, discussing, and critically appraising dance technique and choreographic concepts. The majority of students responded positively to the process of creative and critical thinking. Not all students responded well to one particular style, and transference of knowledge to the students required diversifying on my part. I experimented with different teaching styles to meet various objectives and always challenged myself to find ways to reach each student. I conducted classes by using the following learning methods:

- physical (demonstrated movement phrases);
- verbal (used descriptive words and metaphors to distinguish movement concepts);
- aural (associated the quality of music and/or rhythms with movement concepts);
- visual (used video samples or drew on the white board);
- logical (analyzed the points of movement concepts);
- social (had students work with a partner or in groups);
- solitary (had students work alone encouraging self-study and critical thinking).

Based on feedback, I believe that I played multiple roles in the classroom, tailoring my approach to student needs and appropriate subject matters. With that said, it was crucial that I primarily remained focused on my teaching objectives and avoided trying to be all things to all students. I feel that this can easily dilute learning.

I emphasized presenting ideas logically by building from sub-ideas and concepts, working toward integrating material and resources smoothly, and arriving at a conclusive outcome that was both conceptual and visible. I began by working on specific movement theories in conjunction with physical movement over the course of a two to three-week process. As students built an understanding as well as a vocabulary, they were challenged to perform longer and more complex combinations with emphasis on virtuosity and versatility.

Students felt challenged and motivated and could clearly recognize their progress. By the end of the semester, students felt confident and were prepared to take dance technique and composition to the next level of difficulty.

The ways that students saw themselves as learners, their views of learning, and their perceptions of praise or grades, were all important factors in how I was able to motivate student progress. Some students found extrinsic rewards (like grades) meaningful; for others, this seemed to restrict motivation. Some students saw intelligence as a fixed trait, wanted to look good to others, or avoided challenges; others had a growth mindset, believed effort led to learning, or took on challenges. Some students responded well to encouragement from peers; others were less likely to be influenced by classmates. Discussing with students and recognizing these differences allowed me to successfully encourage and guide them to reach their individual potential, and I believe that by doing so, certain students even bypassed their original goals.

Furthermore, the fostering of comradery among students within the classroom generated a positive learning environment. I observed that when providing students with a thriving setting to build a sense of community, they learned better especially when confronted with differences. Specifically, I observed that student diversity encouraged individuals to deal with cultural differences, and they blossom intellectually and artistically when long-held beliefs and ideas were challenged. Many students recognized and investigated their assumptions in conjunction with their peers, and they developed the ability to understand better the ideas and feelings of others. I believe that by taking this extra measure in the classroom, it benefits the future of students to be successful in diverse settings.

**Weaknesses:** DANC 421/441: Modern III/IV, F2016 evaluations indicated that two students felt that I needed to give them more feedback. I believe that I do evaluate students regularly with the effort to connect with as many as time will allow in a class period. I do value that students are more engaged and learn more effectively when they receive consistent feedback from their professors. And, timeliness, clarity, and personalization are the most important qualities in instructor comments. When students receive thorough feedback, they can better know what is expected of me and will perform better in the future. I did make conscious strides during the spring semester to increase the frequency of both general and individual corrections.

Spring 2017 evaluations from DANC 195: Tap and DANC 235: Intermediate Ballet reflected that some students felt I needed to make more opportunities for one-on-one conferences to discuss their progress. The following are prospects available for students: I have posted office hours on my syllabus and outside of my office; my door is always open to students while I am in my office, even during non-office hours; I have been available for appointments anytime students requested; I routinely respond to student emails within 24 hours; and if students ask for feedback at the end of class, I regularly engage with them. Possibilities for improvement on this topic include: holding set, scheduled conferences at midterm and a follow up if needed and communicating more frequently in class my willingness to meet with students.

#### **D. Academic Advising**

As a first-year faculty, it was not required for me to advise students; although, I sat in on some sessions with Don Borsh.

## **II. MASTERY OF SUBJECT MATTERS & SCHOLARLY ABILITY**

### **A. Research & Other Scholarly/Artistic Activities**

1. New Dance Foundation for the Arts, Inc. - Vice President of the Board, 2016-17. Attended meetings consulting with other board members throughout the year regarding fundraising, grant writing, and production of the upcoming activities including the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Las Vegas Dance in the Desert Festival.
2. 19<sup>th</sup> annual Las Vegas Dance in the Desert Festival – Choreographer and Performer, July 2017
3. Perry-Mansfield Performing Arts School and Camp, Steamboat Springs, CO. - Faculty & Choreographer, June-July 2017. Taught for pre-professional intensive and collaborated (choreographer/composer) with *Strings in the Mountain* for the *P-M Evening of Dance* and *Strings in the Mountain Summer Concert Series*.
4. Loughheed-Kofoed Festival of the Art and SUNY Potsdam, Theatre and Dance, *Senior Choreographic Concert*, PAC Dance Theatre - Choreographer, May 2017. Choreographed a new work entitled, *Threads* featuring the thirteen graduating seniors in dance.
5. Loughheed-Kofoed Festival of the Art and SUNY Potsdam, Theatre and Dance, *Senior Choreographic Concert*, PAC Dance Theatre - Costume Designer, May 2017. Designed and constructed costumes for choreographic work entitled *Threads*.
6. Loughheed-Kofoed Festival of the Art and SUNY Potsdam, Theatre and Dance, *Senior Choreographic Concert*, PAC Dance Theatre - New Media Designer, May 2017. Designed a film backdrop for choreographic work entitled *Threads*.
7. College of Southern Nevada, *Spring Dance Concert* - Costume Designer, April 2017. Designed and constructed costumes for two dance works, *Bride of Frankenstein* and *A Trimbling*.
8. Crane Latin Ensemble, *Dejame Soñar*, Sara M. Snell Music Theatre - Choreographer and Featured Performer, Dec. 2016

### **B.) Awards & Honors**

Nevada Arts Counsel/National Endowment of the Arts - Artist Fellowship, Fiscal Year 2017. \$5000 grant for artist excellence in the category of performing arts, choreography.

**C.) Professional Meetings Attended**

Vice President of the Board, New Dance Foundation for the Arts, Inc. Attended the 2016 Foundation Retreat in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada, Dec. 2016

**III. UNIVERSITY SERVICE**

**A.) Administrative/Committee Assignments**

As a first-year faculty, it was not required for me to serve on committees.

**B.) College-Related Public Serve**

1. SUNY Potsdam, Theatre and Dance, *Senior Choreographic Concert*, PAC Dance Theatre Guest Faculty Mentor, April 2017. Mentored student choreographers in the creative process toward concert performance.
2. SUNY Potsdam, Theatre and Dance hosted American College Dance Association New England Regional Dance Conference - Coordinator of conference faculty, classes, and scheduling, March 2017. Assisted in coordinating conference events including compiling a faculty/class schedule
3. SUNY Potsdam, Theatre and Dance hosted American College Dance Association New England Regional Dance Conference – Faculty, March 2017. Taught ballet and tap master classes.
4. SUNY Potsdam, Dance Ensemble Club – Judge: *Dancing with DE*, March 2017.
5. SUNY Potsdam, Crane School of Music, Opera Club, - Court Dance Workshop, Nov. 2016.
6. SUNY Potsdam, Theatre and Dance - Mentoring Workshop, Oct. 2016. Coordinated with upper division dance students a mentoring workshop for first-year dance students.
7. Northern New York Student Theatre Conference - Presenter: *Musical Theatre Dance Workshop*, Oct. 2016
8. SUNY Potsdam Theatre and Dance Career Preparation Fair - Presenter: *Personal Marketing for Dancers Workshop*, Sept. 2016

**C.) Community Service**

New Dance Foundation for the Arts, Inc. - Board Member/Adviser, 2016-2017.

**IV. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL GROWTH**

**A.) Professional Membership**

**B.) Professional Meetings Attended**

New Dance Foundation for the Arts, Inc. - Board Member, 2017-18. Attended meetings consulting with other board members throughout the year regarding fundraising, grant writing, and production of the upcoming activities including the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Las Vegas Dance in the Desert Festival.

**C.) Courses, Seminars, Workshops, or Degrees Completed**

1. Attended a Nikolais/Louis dance technique refresher workshop, Potsdam, NY, May 2017
2. Attended *Ballet Workshop* (a one week intensive on ballet technique and pedagogy) at College of Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, June 2017

**D.) Describe Future Goals & Plans**

1. Become a faculty advisor for the Student club, Dance Ensemble.
2. Become a member of National Dance Education Organization.
3. Serve on a SUNY Potsdam committee.
4. Act as movement coach for the upcoming SUNY Potsdam, Theatre and Dance production of *Blood Wedding*, Sept.- Nov. 2017.
5. Collaborate with conductor, Kenneth Andrews and the Orchestra of Northern New York on a new choreographic work to Aaron Copeland's *Appalachian Spring* for the May 2018 SUNY Potsdam, Theatre & Dance *Faculty Dance Concert*.
6. Choreograph for the Loughheed-Kofoed Festival of the Art and SUNY Potsdam, Theatre and Dance, *Senior Choreographic Concert* in May 2018.
7. Be on faculty and Choreograph for Perry-Mansfield Performing Arts School and Camp, Steamboat Springs, CO. in June/July 2018.
8. Choreograph and perform for the 20th annual Las Vegas Dance in the Desert Festival in July 2018

  
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Signature Faculty Member

August 31, 2017  
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Date