

Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate

To: The UVM Faculty Senate

From: Curricular Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate, Laura Almstead, Chair

Date: November 2, 2018

Re: Approval of a proposal for a new Bachelor of Arts in Dance submitted by the College of Arts and Sciences

At its meeting on November 1, 2018, the Curricular Affairs Committee approved the actions recommended in the following memo.

The Curricular Affairs Committee approved a proposal for a new Bachelor of Arts in Dance submitted by the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), Department of Music and Dance. Paul Besaw will direct the proposed program. If approved by the Faculty Senate and Board of Trustees, the program will be offered beginning fall 2019.

Program Description, Rationale, and Evidence for Demand

The proposed BA in Dance will provide the opportunity for students to combine concentrated applied and experiential practice in composition and performance through the study of culture, history, and theory. Students that major in Dance will study, develop, and discover dance technique, improvisation, composition, history/theory, cultural dance forms, and independent research/creative work inside a rigorous academic environment that prioritizes critical analysis, research, and writing. The proposed program will also provide opportunities for students to build important intersections between dance and other disciplines in the arts, humanities, health, social science, technology, and education as they also connect with professional dance artists and organizations in Vermont.

Dance was established as an academic program in the College of Arts and Sciences in 2006, and a Minor in Dance approved in 2010. In 2012, the name of the department was changed to the Department of Music and Dance to reflect faculty expertise and course offerings. The proposed program will be the first and only BA in dance offered at a public institution in Vermont, and will address an obvious gap in the fine arts offerings in the College of Arts and Sciences. It is the outcome of careful development of dance curriculum and performance opportunities over the past decade that suit the particular needs of UVM students, collaborate with other art forms, stay current with the development of contemporary dance, and work within facilities, instructional, and other resources.

Relationship to Existing Programs

At UVM, the proposers indicate that the most direct relationships are with Music and Theatre, which have been ongoing. In addition to the existing creative collaborations, this new degree will require students to pursue course work in music and/or theatre, thus reinforcing the natural overlap that exists with performing arts traditions. Based on past students who have minored in dance, the proposers predict that there is likely to be

continued indirect connections with departments such as Art and Art History, Creative Writing, Film and Television Studies, Anthropology, Environmental Studies, Religion, Physical Education, Elementary Education, Exercise and Movement Science, and Physical Therapy that are driven primarily by student interest in these other areas.

Beyond UVM, the proposers indicate that the proposed BA in Dance will be similar to dance programs offered by private institutions in Vermont and other institutions across the country in its combination of practical experience with historical and theoretical inquiry, strong focus on independent creative work and research by students, active faculty of artists/scholars, and frequent contributions from professional guest artists/scholars. What sets this proposed program apart from those offered at other institutions are the close collaborative ties with music composition and production design, expansive offerings of global traditions in dance, small liberal arts style within a larger university context, and flexibility that allows a broader group of students to participate.

Relationship to Department and University Missions

Dance is already included in many statements and goals about the arts at UVM. This new degree will realize opportunities for students to broaden and deepen their studies in dance, aligning them with peers in art, art history, creative writing, film and television studies, music, and theatre. It also will help to achieve a goal set by CAS for its students – to “experience the connectedness and accessibility of a small liberal arts college within a high caliber public research institution.” In addition, the dance major will contribute to UVM’s commitment to diversity through courses that explore global dance traditions in ways that are unique and well-developed, especially for a program its size.

Curriculum

A total of 36 credits are required to complete the proposed BA in Dance, including five required courses, fifteen credits from DNCE courses (a minimum of nine credits at the 100-level or above), and six credits in music and or theatre. The required courses are indicated in the table below. An extensive list of elective options was included in the proposal.

The proposal contained a comprehensive description of the knowledge and skills students would be expected to obtain as they progress through the major in order to achieve the objectives of the proposed major in the areas of both practice and theory. The curriculum is structured to provide breadth through a wide variety of course options that span a variety of dance styles and approaches and a requirement to engage in study in music and/or theatre. Depth is achieved through creative training, practice, and research via a self-designed focus on technique/training, performance, dance history and cultural context, improvisation and site performance (or some combination of those) through their electives choices.

Required Courses

Number	Name	Credits
DNCE 50	Dance History and Legends	
DNCE 060	Movement and Improvisation	
DNCE 111	Contemporary Dance III	
DNCE 160	Dance Composition	
DNCE 280	Advanced Studies in Dance	

All of the required and elective courses exist with the exception of DNCE 280, which will serve as a capstone course for the proposed major. It is currently progressing through the approval process in CourseLeaf. Four of the electives have been taught as special topics courses and are being submitted for permanent course numbers.

Assessment

Dance has already been a part of the Academic Program Review that took place for the Department of Music and Dance in 2016-17. This included a dance professor as an outside evaluator. Dance will continue to be evaluated by the internal and external processes in place at UVM. Additionally, the proposed BA in Dance will be assessed by tracking student success and graduation in a timely manner, surveying graduating seniors, holding public and private yearly meetings with students to solicit feedback. The Department indicates they are adapting their current assessment plan to include assessment goals and systems for dance.

The proposers indicate that review of the program will be ongoing, with a focus at the end of each semester on student course evaluations, student faculty evaluations, and faculty peer reviews when available. Review of metrics will occur annually. Dance Program Director will be the primary person responsible for reviewing the proposed program and will enlist others as appropriate.

Admission Requirements and Advising

Since there is no requirement for an audition, the new dance major will be open to all students in the College of Arts and Science, both those coming to UVM with prior dance training and those who discover dance in college. Paul Besaw will advise students in the proposed program. The Department indicates that there are mechanisms in place to support students if Paul Besaw is on leave or takes a sabbatical.

Anticipated Enrollment and Impact on Current Programs

The Department of Music regularly receives inquiries about a major in dance from prospective students. Approximately 80 students have completed the Minor in Dance since its launch in 2009. A review of 60 student transcripts indicates that roughly 20% of those completing a dance minor would have completed enough coursework to fulfill the proposed requirements for the BA (see Curriculum section below) since many choose to take more than the required number of credits in dance. Based on this, the proposers indicate they expect ~20 to 30 majors in total and anticipate graduating approximately five to eight each year.

Resource Requirements

The proposers indicate that there are no additional costs associated with inauguration of the BA in Dance. The new program can be supported by current resources, facilities, and equipment and planned improvements already included in the budget.

Evidence of Support

The proposed BA in Dance was approved by the CAS Curriculum Committee and faculty. The Dean of CAS, Bill Falls, and the Chair of Theatre, Gregory Ramose, also provided letters of support.

Summary

The proposed BA in Dance will first and only BA in dance offered at a public institution in Vermont and addresses the strong interest in dance as an academic pursuit that has been built at UVM over the last twelve years. A BA in Dance will also address a gap in the fine arts offerings at UVM. Unique attributes of the proposed program include its inclusivity (there will be no entrance auditions) and the opportunity for students to self-design areas of focus or concentration. The curriculum is thoughtfully designed to provide both breadth and depth. The program builds on existing collaborations and courses, and support for the proposed program is evident. Based on all of these things, the proposed BA in Dance will be a welcome addition to the curricular portfolio at UVM.