Appraisal of Diversity Efforts (UW Dance Program)

1) **Student Access and Opportunities:**
Diversity as defined by the University of Washington pertains to race, gender, disability, class, sexual identity/orientation, religion, age, ethnicity, culture, region/geography and indigenous status. Given this definition, the Dance Program is very accessible to diversity students. Most of our students are women. One could say that men are a minority group in dance, not women. We do not have a lot of male dance majors though the numbers are increasing in the major and minor and a number of men enroll in lower level dance courses. Given the nature of the art form, we also offer a safe and inclusive environment to gay, lesbian and bi-sexual students. Students also range in age, despite the youth oriented nature of the art. I don’t know how the Dance Program compares vis-à-vis diversity to other units on the campus. We strive to be a highly accessible program by offering numerous classes to students with little or no prior knowledge of dance. Thus, students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and remote regions who may not have had any prior knowledge or opportunity to study dance can enroll in Dance 101, 102 and Dance 110-112. Dance 101 and Dance 102 are difficult to get into because of the high demand for these courses – though we offer 6 sections of 101 and 1 or 2 sections of Dance 102 each academic quarter. Access to these high demand courses is based on class standing within the university. There are students from all disciplines and backgrounds in these classes, including Asian and African American students. African American students who take Dance 101 are often those involved in varsity athletics. This summer (04), Lecturer Jurg Koch taught a course in Integrated Dance Composition for disabled and non-disabled students. Koch is teaching an additional course exploring training methodologies for integrated dance communities in autumn quarter 04. In addition, the Dance Program is looking into hosting a summer Integrated Dance residency with Axis Dance Company from San Francisco. The residency would be open to interested UW students on a credit basis.

Application to the Dance Major occurs once a year. Historically, all applicants (with few exceptions) have been accepted into the dance major. Last spring, we became more selective and accepted 57% of applicants because the faculty was concerned that if we continued to grow the quality of the program would suffer a decline. (At that time we had approximately 60 majors and 50 minors.) This fall, we accepted 60% of applicants into the major. We are graduating a large number of seniors this year and I suspect we will begin to accept a larger percentage of applicants into the major. All applicants are accepted into the dance minor.

2) **Student development and retention:**
One aspect of development and retention is scholarship opportunities. I am eager to work with the College development office and the Dance Program Advisory Board to develop diversity recruitment and retention funds, but at present our program has very little in the way of scholarship opportunities of any type. At best, we can offer one year of tuition to a promising student – this is based on talent, not need, or diversity status. We also have
an even smaller scholarship for academic excellence, and leadership. At present, we are unable to recruit diversity students because we do not have the funds to support four years of education.

Many of our majors are double majors. The Dance Program Advisor and I work with these students to facilitate their degree plans and timely graduation. We have also revised the curriculum to facilitate flexibility in career goals and time to degree. In general, the attrition has been a result of students’ financial pressures— they finish one degree and are well on their way to finishing the dance major but opt to graduate because they need to work full time. This sometimes results in students getting a dance minor rather than a major.

—Breakdown of Dance Majors and Minors by Ethnicity 2003/04—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Majors</th>
<th>Minors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>800=Caucasian 37 28</td>
<td>37 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>987= not indicated 6 8</td>
<td>6 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>722=Hispanic 1 0</td>
<td>1 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>810=Afro/Am 1 0</td>
<td>1 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>612=Asian/Korean 3 4</td>
<td>3 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>611=Asian/Japanese 1 3</td>
<td>1 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>600=Asian/Indian 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>744=Hispanic/Castilian 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>608=Filipino 3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>621=Asian 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>619=Vietnamese 1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>605=Chinese 2</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>879=Blk Filipino 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>604=Cambodian 1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The majority of our dance majors are Caucasian women. I can attribute this to a number of factors:

1) This profile reflects that of the UW, overall.
2) This may also be a regional issue. Dance opportunities outside larger metropolitan areas are few, especially in more rural areas and lower socio-economic regions.
3) Our faculty and curriculum focus on western theatre dance – primarily ballet and modern dance. Typically, these types of dance opportunities are available in more upwardly mobile sectors of our society, primarily in white communities. In many places modern dance classes are not available at all. The majority of our students have a background in ballet and/or jazz. In this region, ballet and jazz idioms are primarily available to and practiced by Caucasian females. This is due in part to the cost of dance training, but also due to parents’ reluctance to allow their boys to study dance. Some
parents buy into negative stereotypes and this prevents young boys from being exposed to the pleasure and rigors of the art form.

4) In the US dance has long been identified as a feminine art. Thus, students who have experience in dance when they enter the major are primarily women.

However, many diversity students are first exposed to dance through Dance 101. More and more, we are seeing students continue to dance after their experience of 101. This is how most of the men in our courses and the major have become acquainted with dance.

3) Engagement with the external community:
As the Director, I have made it known to faculty that I consider community outreach very important, and an aspect of our program that I would like to enhance. At present, the Dance Program’s primary and most consistent engagement with the community is via our very inexpensive performance series. We are currently in the process of converting one of our studios into a convertible black-box theatre space (this is being done through grants, awards and development). One of my dreams for this space is that it will be used for outreach performances. My hope is that we can adopt a few schools that lack art enrichment programs and have them bused over to student/faculty performances and lecture/demonstrations.

For the last two years Dance Program majors have worked with elementary school children in Seattle and East Side public schools in partnership with the Pacific Northwest Outreach program and UW Pipeline.

When possible the Dance Program in conjunction with the UW World dance series offers free master classes to community members. In the last two years, these have included master classes from members of the Ballet de Senegal and members of Brazil’s Grupo Corpo.

We are currently discussing the formation of an undergraduate repertory group that would give outreach performances on and off campus. Assistant Professor Jennifer Salk is involved with the UW Rural Communities Project and would like to involve the new repertory group in performance in the Yakima Valley.

We have been engaged in preliminary conversations with Delridge Community Center to see how we might involve UW student and faculty with this upcoming community center for the arts in West Seattle. There are no concrete plans in place at this time.

Faculty members teach and choreograph in the Puget Sound region and serve on arts panels and the boards of cultural organizations.

4) Staff and administrative diversity:
The Dance Program employs the following individuals:
Administrator/Undergrad Advisor (Caus/F)
Program Coordinator (Caus/F)
Musical Director (Caus/M).
5) **Faculty diversity:**
Faculty diversity is a concern with regard to race, through not with regard to gender or sexual orientation. It is also important to note that—although women may be in the minority in the academy, there are typically fewer male faculty in dance departments.

A search for an Assistant Professor was conducted in 2001 and we are currently involved in a search for an Artist-in-Residence. In both cases, search committee members were instructed to be as inclusive as possible in compiling a list of acceptable candidates. A diversity candidate (Afro-Am/M) was short-listed and brought in for an on-campus interview. He was not our first choice for the position.

In general, I have been disappointed with the number of candidates from underrepresented groups. In the past, our most qualified candidates have not been from underrepresented groups. This may be a reflection of our geographical location. I am less inclined to say that it is connected to the curriculum. A focus on modern dance and ballet is central to most undergraduate dance programs. Another issue that may affect the number of diversity candidates has to do with where the position is advertised. We advertised for the aforementioned positions in the Chronicle for Higher Education but not list the position search in any publications targeting diversity populations. This decision was purely financial---we did not have funds for advertise in more than one publication.

Faculty by rank:
1 Professor (Caus/F)
1 Associate Professor (Caus/F)
2 Assistant Professors (Caus/F)
1 Artist in Residence (Caus/M)
1 Lecturer/Dance 101 Coordinator (Caus/M)
1 Lecturer/Techical Director –50% (Caus/M)
1 Lecturer (temporary) (Caus/M)

Faculty teaching load is distributed equitably and varied between 6-8 credit hours per quarter. Those teaching a lecture course typically teach one rather than two studio courses in a given quarter.

6) **Curriculum and Research:**
As stated above, the focus of our curriculum is on western theatre dance- its practice, history, aesthetic theory. There are two specific courses that address non-western dance forms:

**Dance 234** is offered once a year (budget cuts prevent more frequent offerings). This course changes topics frequently and offers students a kinesthetic and academic experience of a non-western dance practice. Recent topics have included: Puerto-Rican folk dance, Afro-Cuban Dance forms, Javanese Court Dance, West African dance and drumming, Cambodian Court dance and Capoiera. I am currently trying to hire a hula teacher for the spring quarter. This course is primarily experiential and takes place in the dance studio but students are also asked to learn about other cultural traditions related to dance such as, music, worship and gender roles. This course is a requirement for the
major but is open to minors and non-majors on a space-available basis. (We offered West African dance two quarters last year. In truth, I hoped and expected that this course would attract more students from under-represented groups but this was not the case.)

The other course addressing dance as a broad cultural practice is **Dance 250: The Creative Context**. Since 2001, I have taught this class with the repertory of the Chamber Dance Company as its focal point. Beginning fall 2004 I will significantly broaden the content of this course. The course will be taught using the text entitled, *Dancing* and will be used in conjunction with the eight past video series featured on *PBS*. This text and video compendium offer a cross-cultural look at dance such that Louis the XIV is discussed along side the dance and music of the Asante and Classical ballet and Kabuki are compared and contrasted. Modern dance is discussed as a fusion of western and non-western dance forms and worldviews. This course now holds a very different relationship to the curriculum. It is now a gateway into the major, a prerequisite to our two dance history courses and a requirement for the major. If I am able to get additional TA support, I would like to increase the enrollment for this course to 100 students, enabling majors, minors and non-majors access to the course.

**Dance 110-112, 210-212** (Jazz I and Jazz II) offer technique in jazz dance forms and hip-hop. These courses are particularly popular with non-majors and students from underrepresented groups.

Lecturer, Jurg Koch taught an integrated dance composition course during Summer B term 2004. The course was geared to physically disabled students and non-disabled students. The compositional process was explored, including partner work. This fall (’04) Koch will be teaching a course delving into training methodologies appropriate to integrated dance communities.

Last year, the **Dance Program Writing Center** was initiated under the guidance of PhD. Candidate, Steve Corbett. Dance Program Writing Center staff (Corbett and undergraduate tutors) are available an average of 7 hours a week to work with all students (dance majors, minors or any registered in a dance class). We have found the many ESL students in lower division classes (specifically Dance 102) are benefiting from working with Writing Center staff.

**Faculty research** is in the areas of dance science and motor learning, choreography, reconstruction, lighting design, history and integrated dance (the integration of disabled and non-disabled dancers) training methodologies and composition. Social-political themes that touch on issues of identity, oppression and war have been prevalent in scholarly work (Cooper), some of the pieces choreographed by faculty members (Simpson, Kyle- *Myra’s War*) as well as some of the dances reconstructed by the Chamber Dance Company (Wiley).

Artist in Residence, Mark Haim has been working collaboratively with a group of youth at risk boys at the St. Joseph’s Ballet in Santa Ana, California for three years. This year
they were all invited to perform at the prestigious American Dance Festival in North Carolina. Unfortunately, the festival could not provide any funding to help actualize this collaborative dance project.

Lecturer Jürg Koch joined the faculty in winter 04. His presence in the department promises to have a profound impact on both the curriculum and increased diversity in the student body. Koch was a member of the UK-based integrated contemporary dance company *CandoCo* for several years. Koch is also an expert in integrated dance training methodologies. Since joining the faculty, he has taught two new courses for disabled and non-disabled dancers—Composition for Integrated Dance and Training Methodologies for Integrated Dance (see above). This is a very exciting direction for the program, with untold possibilities such as a summer institute for integrated dance that is currently in the proposal stage. The major impediment to sustaining and developing these courses is that Koch is in a non-permanent position. His position is funded through June 2005. The Dance Program Director considers this a priority for the program and has been in conversations with Deans Bridges and Halleran, Provost Jeffords and the College of Arts & Science development staff in an effort to secure a permanent position for Koch.

**Climate:**
As stated earlier, the Dance Program offers a very open and safe environment for its students with regard to diversity. As artists, we are all accustomed to thinking outside the box and existing outside the mainstream of society. Thus, the program provides a sense of family to students. Faculty and staff are extremely responsive to student needs. We also began a faculty mentorship program to help students feel more connected to the program and faculty.

I think the entire university needs to do more to make the campus a welcoming place to African American students and those with indigenous status. I do not see students from these groups well represented in dance nor elsewhere on campus.