



SANTA ANA COLLEGE

SAC Dance Career Advisory Board Meeting

Spring 2024

Friday, April 26, 2024

Santa Ana College, Zoom Meeting <https://rscdd-edu.zoom.us/j/82853853286>

SAC Dance Department - Committee Advisory Board Members

- Heather Gillette
- Marlene Pena-Marin
- Robert Porch
- Carrie Woodson

I. Call to order:

- The first meeting of the Career Advisory Board for the Dance Program: Heather Gillette called the meeting to order.

II. Welcome and Introductions:

Introductions of name, work title, background of dance education and dance industry:

- Heather Gillette - Santa Ana College, Department Chair
- Marlene Pena-Marin – Team Director of the Ballet Folklorico Conservatory at Orange County School of the Arts; instructor for 22 years; has a connection with Santa Ana College through family member that was a former dance instructor.
- Robert Porch – Director of Ballroom Dance at Orange County School of the Arts; has many years' experiences of performing and competing in ballroom dance.
- Carrie Woodson - Full-Time Temporary Dance Department Faculty, SAC; experience in CTE programs within the high school system; teaching experience in dance in both college and the industry.

III. Purpose of Advisory Meeting:

Heather Gillette explains the reasons for application to become a CTE program

Reason #1: Rebuilding the program

- Coming out of the pandemic, the SAC Dance Department was in need of rebuilding the program.
- Returning students did not have the technical skill sets to audition and transfer to large university dance programs.
- If students are not prepared, how else can the dance program create new career pathways for student success.
- Preparing students to work in the dance field: after-school programs; parks & recreation programs; dance studio instructors for children; audition preparation for amusement parks such as Disney; choreographic projects for high school programs.
- Jobs in the dance industry are available; how can the SAC Dance program create the necessary pathways to prepare students to meet the demands of the dance industry.

Reason #2: Hiring qualified dance experts in the commercial dance field and reinforcing the workforce industry

- Being a CTE approved program allows the opportunity to hire more instructors, experts in dance, who have work-related experience and/or a bachelor's degree in dance. Currently, college dance instructors must have a master's degree in dance. There are many qualified dance instructors who have a bachelor's degree, but not a master's degree.
- By hiring dance experts with an extensive dance background and/or have a bachelor's degree from a university dance program, we are reinforcing the workforce industry and providing more accessibility to varied dance opportunities to students.

Reason #3: Building support for underprivileged students to meet inclusivity and equity standards

- The SAC Dance program is currently undergoing the application process for non-credit courses to support underprivileged students to continue taking dance technique classes to improve their skill sets.

- Offering non-credit classes bypasses the limitations of non-repeatability of classes; a current policy that prevents students to continue on-going training. The non-repeatability policy presents a disadvantage for dance students who cannot afford to train in a private dance studio sector.
- Offering non-credit dance classes allows for students to take a dance class a couple of times at a lower level before moving forward to the next level.
- The dance program cannot offer non-credit classes until we are CTE approved.

Reason #4: Offering internship programs is a viable pathway to increase student success

- The dance program has a vision of creating partnerships with local studios, parks and recreation programs, SAC community classes, and the Disney Foundation Internship program.
- If the dance program is CTE approved, grant applications to support these internship programs are possible.
- Viability is the goal in serving students.

Reason #5: Creating dual-enrollment partnerships

- Creating opportunities for dual-enrollment partnerships with feeder high school dance programs will increase SAC enrollments, support college credit, and future interest to become a dance major at SAC.

Reason #6: Creating a foundation for future certificates, degrees, and jobs

- Current partnerships with dance programs at OCHSA are with the Ballet Folklorico and Ballroom instructors, Marlene Pena-Marin and Robert Porch.
- The OCHSA instructors consistently receive requests for dance instructors and/or performers in these specific dance genres. There is a need for more dance instructors to teach Ballet Folklorico and Latin Ballroom in the local community.
- The SAC dance program is in the beginning stages of developing new courses and certificates in these specific areas of dance to train students to be prepared to work in the local job market.
- It is a vision that these new certificates may lay the foundation for building a bachelor's degree in dance, International Dance and/or a bachelor's degree in dance, Mexican Folk Dance.
- The Santa Ana community is rich in its cultural arts and we're not moving forward in these areas of dance. We could be the first dance program to offer a bachelor's degree in international dance.

IV. Curriculum Review/Overview

- The current AA degree and Certificate in Dance are high in units and course requirements. It has been brought to Professor Gillette's attention to review the units and decrease the units. The FPA Dean has suggested leaving the degree and certificate alone, and instead, building new certificates with less units and course requirements.
- Currently, Professor Gillette is working on a Commercial Dance Certificate with two different levels in the Curricunet Meta system.

Reviewed the courses in the proposed commercial dance certificates and discussed ideas: A conversation and feedback about internships, teaching/assistance experiences, and hiring qualifications from Heather Gillette, Marlene Pena-Marin, Robert Porch, and Carrie Woodson

Heather Gillette:

- Does this certificate, in your opinion, provide enough training to prepare the student to be ready for an internship program for some sort of work?

Marlene Pena-Marin:

- When you say level 3 and level 4, or level 1 and 2, is that primarily beginning? I'm not familiar with an internship like at Disney. Do they expect a higher level? Because, if a beginning level starts at 1, 2, then at level 3, 4 it's probably more at an intermediate level, right? Or would it depend on those students that pick it up quickly? I'm not sure with an internship program, what their expectation is with a student having a higher level of ability and execution. I think if an intermediate level is okay, then this would work absolutely.

Heather Gillette:

- Taking into consideration that the certificates would offer an intro level to commercial dance, perhaps the second level to commercial dance could possibly have a pre-requisite, "By audition only or approval of instructor". At the end of the second level certificate, there could be an assessment and evaluation as part of a final project to enter into an internship program. This would also depend on the studio program. Perhaps someone from an outside source could come in to provide feedback, and maybe even offer a mock interview to prepare a student for what the internship is looking for.

Marlene Pena-Marin:

- I like the audition or approval only because if a dance student is really looking to go to the next level, they have more buy in to prepare and be ready for it. It's not about, "Oh, I think I'm going to try it and see how it goes" kind of a thing. So that's where I think auditions or approvals will hold them a little bit more accountable and think, "this is the real deal", right?

Robert Porch:

- I think it's really a good point from Marlene in terms of having somebody test them, so they're prepared for it.
- These actual people are going and applying for internships. It's going to depend on the individual, right? Because some people will come in with a little more experience and they'll get a lot out of this. They would be ready for an internship at a studio, especially a studio who is going to ease them into it. The studio is going to give them kids classes at first, or like at a ballroom studio, you would give them a beginning adult class who are doing this as a hobby that's right for them.
- So, I think on paper this is something that would prepare them for an internship. And then, after that, it would really depend on the individual. Do they take this very seriously? Some people will take these classes and they never really be ready, even if they did this for 10 years. They would never really be ready to work as a dancer or teach people. Sometimes, it's not in the cards, but some people could do it very well. So, I think on paper, yes, you could definitely say this is for someone to be ready for an internship.

Heather Gillette:

- On paper, it's one thing, and then in real life it's different. Putting it into action; is this student really prepared? In reference to what do these studios require when they're looking to hire an instructor. What are their expectations? What are they looking for? What do they need?
- I think that would be another piece of information that I would like to include in reference to how I design the program, taking into consideration how to meet a particular criterion. How do I prepare these students for that? It's almost making me think as part of the training on our end, to offer smaller, masterclass workshops; maybe it's part of a final dance practicum. But it goes back to asking these studio directors what are they looking for? What is the job? In the job market, what are they looking for?

Carrie Woodson:

- It's the soft skills: show up, be on time, have good work ethics, keep training, be healthy, take care of your body, so that you know your commodity is there.
- You talked about field trips. I don't know if there's some new way that Disney or other venues are preparing students for some internships. I'm not aware of that, but I do know that we might have to receive funding in order to offer field trips to the internships and an audition class. Because they won't come to the college.

Marlene Pena-Marin:

- There are programs that you can go into. I don't know what the fee is, how that works, but I do know that they are available.

Heather Gillette:

- That would be something in the syllabus, or whatever students would be required to go to an audition, but we would fund it. That's another reason why we would be applying to become a CTE program. I could write a grant for these fundings to take a group of students to an audition as part of their final dance practicum. Or be part of the Disney program where they're learning these mock auditions, the application process, the portfolio and digital portfolio; all those pieces should be incorporated into commercial dance.
- This is where these ideas should take place in the commercial dance class, level 4. In the course content that has been written; students are required to practice mock auditions, put together a portfolio, write a resume, go to an audition, go to a studio interview. This would be part of the field trips.

Carrie Woodson:

- How do you, professionals, feel about students even doing some hours outside of our school at another school? Saying, "We need these students to do a couple of hours, maybe 10 hours in the studio as an assistant". They're observing, and they have some kind of responsibility in the classroom based on the teacher assignments, but then they have to write about that experience. What is it that they're seeing that the students might need? like? They've experienced the class observation for 10 hours, and then they report back, we have a signature, and they've done that skill set before they move on.

Marlene Pena-Marin:

- It's a great idea. I think that would be wonderful. I know, Robert, that's how it works in the ballroom studio. I think it's great to give them a feeling for what this job is like. What kinds of things are we looking for? How close are they to be? Teach one of these classes, as opposed to assist.

Heather Gillette:

- In the Professional Studio Practices course, level 2, this is where it's written in such a way that field trips are included, and under supervision. If I was teaching this class under supervision, and I'm working with you, Robert

or Marlene with OCSA, some of my students are coming to your school to practice teaching a master class as part of as part of their core requirements. Class work within the Professional Studio Practices class.

Robert Porch:

- I think that would be great, because we work the same way in the studio. You'd be just as valuable to your studio environment.

Heather Gillette:

- So, it's set up within the hours of this course, that students go out on a field trip. It's supervised. The SAC instructor, along with the other instructor from the studio; the work is signed off by both instructors. I would be, and the other instructor here on this end, observing the student's teaching skills within the classroom.

Carrie Woodson:

- I like this idea a lot. And what is that going under? Professional Studio Practices? But I also want to take into consideration the idea that the students must go out and talk to a studio. We have a list of those students who are willing to do something like this; they must go and sell themselves and say, "Would you be willing to supervise me in this internship for a certain number of hours?" That way, they already have a connection with the studio. And if they ever wanted the job, they already made the connection because we're not going to give them a job, not necessarily.

Heather Gillette:

- Then, I'm curious if that should be in the final Practicum course?

Carrie Woodson:

- That way, the students have already made the connection to a studio; they have practiced, and the studio watched. And if that studio said, "I want that teacher", now the student got a job, and we've got data that says that it worked.

Heather Gillette:

- I'm just curious if this idea falls into the final Dance Practicum course?

Marlene Pena-Marin:

- Why not? It's a hands-on experience, right?

Heather Gillette:

- So, I would need to be writing a new course here, (indicating Dance Practicum placed in the Commercial Dance certificate) and in this final dance practicum, there would be different ways that the students would have a list of completions; going out into the studios for introductions; offering to teach a master class; (already have a list of names lined up); going to auditions; completing the application review process.
- So, in the final dance practicum, the students are doing all of these tasks and skill sets. Those tasks are part of the final project, after completing all of the other coursework.

Robert Porch:

- So, Professional Studio Practices would be one step, and then, the final Dance Practicum would be kind of many steps.

Heather Gillette:

- In Studio Practices, this is about learning how to teach. Who are your clients? What age group are you teaching? Students would learn how to create a lesson plan and also a unit plan if they had to teach for 5 to 10 weeks. There are different things to learn such as what kind of music? What level of technique are you teaching and what's your role regarding a higher level if you're asked to choreograph in a studio production?
- I'm not familiar with local studios. What's the expectations for instructors when they're hired out in that field? Robert, do you know?

Robert Porch:

- We talked about internships at dance studios. When you get an internship at a dance studio, you do all kinds of things. They want you to do their social media. They want you to work at the front desk. If somebody calls in sick, then you're teaching a class because they want you there. They want you to learn many aspects of the job; and they need help from young people with working the technology and social media and all that stuff. So, when I see a young person get an internship at a studio, I often think dance is going to be a minor part of the job; it's going to be one of many parts. They are making themselves useful in many ways. And of course, dance instructors are always calling in sick and it's very important that they, the owners of the studio, are making sure that the interns know the different classes, what's going on in the studio, because they will probably have to substitute at some point.

Marlene Pena-Marin:

- For me, I have assistance with all my teachers at my studio, and they're valuable; having someone as an intern to be an assistant to a class. And the assistants are by age, meaning age appropriate and level of ability.

Heather Gillette:

- Marlene. I would love to understand a little bit more about how to prepare a particular student to move into this next role as possibly an assistant. When you are looking for an assistant, what are some of the requirements that they have to have? What are you looking for?

Marlene Pena-Marin:

- I'm looking for a student that knows the dance form, knows the art form, knows how to warm children up. They need to understand some of the basic pedagogies of teaching the dance form, being able to articulate footwork with a student.
- Typically, in a class, we have classes by levels, and usually, there are levels within your levels. So, for me, my assistants' roles are being able to see a child that's really struggling with a certain combination or certain expectation. They pull them aside to help them and give them a little bit of one-on-one with the goal to get them back with the other kids in the classroom. So, interns need to be comfortable with doing this. Some kids are and some kids aren't. It's understanding what your place is and how to keep a class engaged? How do you keep your students engaged. It takes a little bit of practice.

Heather Gillette:

- It does. It's also making me think a little bit of the second level of Professional Studio Practices. In teaching dance, you have to read the room and be able to immediately identify which student needs extra help. It takes some "know how".

Carrie Woodson:

- There are a couple of studios that have internship opportunities. The interns work at the front desk, and they take classes for free. They learn the skill sets. They learn the technique. They learn how to clean the toilet. They learn how to answer the phone and follow up on things. These 2 studios offer this training, from the professional end to the other end of studio instruction; teaching young kids, and how to temper the temperament by shadowing and watching. The teacher says, "I need you to do this", and the interns do it because they don't always have that initiation to get work done. The interns need to see it modeled. And so, it's exciting because we already know 2 prominent organizations that have a structure in place for internships, and the students can report back.

Heather Gillette:

- I'm considering how to build and fine tune some of these ideas into another course and/or certificate. The language and some of the expectations and requirements need to be rewritten because I think the course might be up for a quadrennial review pretty soon. I need to decide what to do in this final course.
- Are we in agreement that these 2 courses, DNCE 180 (Dance Studio Practices) and this new number 300, should be part of the certificate, a requirement? The goal is to prepare the students to move out into the field and work.

Marlene Pena-Marin:

- Yes, I agree, if we're giving a stamp of approval that a student knows how to do A, B, C, D, E, F, G. A student can perform, but we all know that as a dancer, the other side of what we do is teach. I mean, they go hand-in-hand. If we're going to survive, it's the professional side. the daily grind side.
- I'm looking at the certificate and it seems like a lot, but by the same token, you're giving a stamp of approval, and you're saying this is a certificate, then, I think, yes.

Heather Gillette:

- I am going to speak about that idea, Marlene, that you brought up something. This certificate seems very heavy with the required courses. But we know in the real world they have to have these skills to be ready. And even then, they may not yet even be ready. They might need to take this a couple of times over.
- Right now, the V.P. of academics says that the certificate has too many units. But I put my foot down. To prepare the student to go out into this field working, they must have this.
- To approve them with only a beginning level skill set and be ready to work in the field? My answer is, "No". Does that make sense? I do not want to budge at all with my units. In this field, it takes quite a while to build up the skill set to meet a particular standard, to then be able to qualify to either perform or to teach, and/or something else. We know this.

Marlene Pena-Marin:

I agree, a hundred percent.

Heather Gillette:

- In my opinion, if I gave a student a stamp of approval with level one and level 2 skill sets, I would not think that a student would be ready. Level 1 and 2 are the precursors, the pre-requisites. A student moves through these courses first in this area and if they're serious enough, then they would move forward here. And this certificate would be by audition only and/or by instructor's approval.

Marlene Pena-Marin:

- They're telling you from the powers that be, that all of this is too much?

Heather Gillette:

- Yes. Correct.

Carrie Woodson:

- If our committee makes recommendations that would help support Heather, that would be great. If you don't, then please give us some justification for what we should be doing.

Marlene Pena-Marin:

- We're dancers. Robert. You probably know what it takes. If you're receiving a certificate to teach in a studio, and you think about what you went through with Arthur Murray. What did you have to go through?

Robert Porch:

- It was a lot. The good thing about that situation is that they continue to teach you, like Carrie was saying. You're working at the desk, but then you can take unlimited free classes. It's the same thing with the Arthur Murray and Fred Astaire system. They keep teaching you until you know more than the people who were walking through the door wanting lessons.
- I think that to get a certificate, I feel the same way as Marlene does. The students need to take these classes. I don't think this looks like too many classes, especially if you already have training, you can test out of the first certificate. If you don't have enough training, then you should be doing more.
- I have one point about the Professional Studio Practices, and the Final Dance Practicum. It's so interesting that within the compliance of Santa Ana College, you have the full choice to decide if they move on or don't. I feel like with some of these internships, we have to get someone else, like a dance studio, to agree to this person.
- You could think that a student is awesome, but there will be some studios who don't agree. It's a hard dance world, like Arthur Murray. You have to be someone who attracts people. They want people who are going to sell. They want people who can sell lessons and make money for them.
- Some of these kids might be a tough sell. If we're making it mandatory for students to teach in a studio, there's going to be a situation where somebody will have to work harder than others to get a job.

Carrie Woodson:

- It's a competition. Out there, you have to sell yourself. They may have completed the coursework here, but in reality, they still have to audition for that studio and apply for that job. They're not going to get it just because they have a certificate. It's like getting your MBA. You still have to apply and sell yourself. If you don't have charisma or talent, you're not going to get the job.

Robert Porch:

- Maybe that's part of the education; you have got to learn.

Heather Gillette:

- In the Commercial Dance coursework (not the Commercial Dance Certificate) some of the assignments require writing a resume, putting together a dance portfolio, putting together a social media reel. It also includes the soft skills of knowing how to discuss dance, using the appropriate language of how to interview.
- I can't decide if the interview should be in the final Dance Practicum or included in the Commercial Dance course. I'm inspired to write this course, even though I was advised to reduce the number of units.

Heather Gillette proposes the following:

- Is the committee in favor of leaving the Commercial Dance Certificate as is with the required courses and units?
- All members agreed: Heather Gillette, Marlene Pene-Marin, Robert Porch, Carrie Woodson

V. Other topics – not part of the original agenda

- Defined the differences between Dance Repertory and Dance Production
- Observing that Choreography I was listed in the beginning level for the Intro to Commercial Dance, but Choreography II was not included in the Commercial Dance Certificate.
- Defined the differences between DNCE 202A Choreography and DNCE 202B Choreography for Dance Majors.
- Carrie Woodson expressed her concerns that her students in the choreography class from the previous semester struggled with their final projects. She asked for insight from the committee.
- Marlene Pena-Marin shared similar struggles with her composition class and believes that this particular student population is lacking creativity, most likely affected by the pandemic. She calls them the "Covid Babies".
- The committee discussed the idea if DNCE 202B should be included in the Commercial Dance certificate.

Heather Gillette proposed the following:

- Is the committee in favor of including DNCE 202B in the Commercial Dance certificate?
- All members agreed: Heather Gillette, Marlene Pene-Marin, Robert Porch, Carrie Woodson

- Heather Gillette confirmed that other dance courses will be added as electives to the certificate, but she has not yet done so.
- Marlene Pena-Marin inquired if the certificate was a two-year program, and if so, would students be able to complete everything in two years.
- Heather Gillette explained that the Introduction to Commercial Dance certificate is a one-year program and that the Commercial Dance certificate is another one-year program and geared towards the advanced dancer.
- Heather Gillette shared with the committee that Jacob Poore, Assistant Director of OC COE, informed her that the job description, “Dance Instructor” was nowhere to be found in the labor market search. The title was considered “too vague”.
- Heather Gillette shared with the committee the following email from Jacob Poore:

Based on Diego's research. We recommend removing self-enrichment teachers. This occupation includes a variety of teachers and instructors, instructors related to numerous hobbies, and they said, hobbies such as musical instruments, art, dance, knitting, acting, choir drama, horseback riding.

As for the other 3 occupations, I do want to note that dancers and entertainers and performers, sports and related workers. All others are considered below middle skill.

- The committee was confused and offended by this statement. They wanted to know where this information came from, what data supports this, and what is the OC COE system.
- Heather Gillette stated that she will contact Jacob Poore to discuss these issues.

VI. Announcements and Adjournment:

- Heather Gillette announced that the certificates will be sent to the committee members along with the minutes. She asked the members to contact her if they had any questions or other information to share.
- Meeting adjourned.

VII. Highlights discussed

Ideas rephrased by Heather Gillette

- The committee was in favor of the Commercial Dance certificate having a pre-requisite, “By audition only or approval of instructor”.
- The committee was in favor of leaving the Commercial Dance Certificate as is with the required courses and units.
- The committee was in favor of keeping DNCE 202B Choreography for Dance Majors in the certificate.
- Include an assessment and evaluation as part of a final project to enter into an internship program.
- Bring an expert from the working field to provide feedback, and/or offer a mock interview to prepare a student for what the internship is looking for.
- Offer masterclass workshops as part of a final dance practicum.
- Build soft skills.
- Offer field trips to studios, internship programs.
- Create budget/grant for field trips, master classes.
- In the final Dance Practicum course, include volunteer field work at approved destination with writing assignments.
- Create strong relationships with local industry workforce and develop guidelines and standards for internship program.
- The Dance Studio Practices course needs clear SLOs, objectives, standards, guidelines, and assignments for student success.