

Creative arts Division

Dance /Theatre Department

Prepared by: Warren Lucas department chair, with input from full time dance instructor Vernon Gallegos and part time faculty Janet Shaw and Liz Stimpson

I. Description and Mission

- A. For the past seventeen years, the DeAnza College Dance/Theatre Department has been developing curriculum and presenting productions using words, images and movement together to create expressive theatrical performance experiences that are progressive and transformational for our community. During this time we have collaborated with DeAnza faculty from within the Creative Arts Division, the Environmental Sciences Department, the Language Arts, and the Social Science/Humanities Divisions, various community organizations, and educational institutions.

In 2004, under the leadership of President Brian Murphy, De Anza College initiated a major shift in the educational focus of the college; this was not a major change in focus for the department. As part of the curriculum, both faculty and students are encouraged to become active participants within both the school and the community at large. In support of the new initiative, the Institute for Community and Civic Engagement was established, and school events organizers were specifically encouraged in the areas of Cultural Competence, Outreach, and Community Collaborations. The mission of the college is to give voice to multicultural diversity and prepare students to become actively involved in their communities.

Last year, as part of the Creative Arts Division's Visiting Artist Series, utilizing funds from Strategic Planning Initiatives and DASB we presented two contemporary dance technique master classes by Robert Moses, a hip-hop dance technique master class and lecture/demonstration on the history of hip-hop dance by Rennie Harris, and a ballet technique master class and movement workshop, by Alonzo King. The student responses to these interactions have been overwhelmingly positive. Some of them have described their learning experiences with our talented dance artists as: "major enlightening encounters with genius"; others have said that "It was awesome, or cool; but none of them have found them uninteresting or boring.

This year we have a special project engaging the work of innovative modern dance choreographer Donald McKayle, professor of

dance at the University of California, named by the Dance Heritage Coalition "one of America's Irreplaceable Dance Treasures." Mr. McKayle is a member of The Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program, which was established to increase the profile of minority scholars who have established themselves as leaders in their prospective fields. Mr. McKayle will teach Master Classes and stage a student production of "Songs of the Disinherited," in DeAnza's new Visual and Performing Arts Center for our first performance "*Spirit House Dances*" This project offers a rare opportunity for community college students to collaborate with a historically significant, renowned working artist in an enriching, creative environment. To extend the influence of the project, students from local high schools and charter schools will be invited, with assistance from the college Student Leadership & Academic Mentoring for Success staff, to attend a performance of "Songs of the Disinherited," free of charge, serving to expose young people to the performing arts who would not normally have such an opportunity. This project is based on intense learning and creative activities undertaken by a core group of approximately 20 - 30 students from the De Anza Dancer's Workshop, and Dance Master Class participation by approximately 100 De Anza students and community members, and 400 students from local high schools and charter schools. A process of inquiry will evolve through the twelve week period around the issue of personal development, commitment, training, emotional expression, and interpretation of performance choreography. Students will learn the processes involved in creating a professional dance production that will give the group the unique opportunity to immerse in an intensive experience with other peers under the direction of a master artist and we will have made a positive contribution to the community at large. This is the initiation of the potential that the VPAC has for stimulating the continual growth of the cultural environment at DeAnza.

- B. The program's main strengths are in the basic skills, transfer and career/technical areas. The basic skills and techniques acquired by our students allow many of them the potential to secure employment, and /or transfer to four year institutions. The program contributes to general physical, emotional, and cultural health of the community, stimulating learning experiences, developing individual imaginations and motivating the creative process. We have experienced and dedicated faculty, a broad diversity of students, strong enrollment in classes, a variety of technique classes offered.
- C. The program would be improved if we developed student interest in classes that require a higher level of technical difficulty. The program

would be improved if we had staff for the new VPAC, someone to manage the facility and, an instructor to teach technical classes so we could utilize the facilities of the new VPAC for additional instruction and to provide competent staffing and crews to operate the critical technical equipment and systems of the facility for the future. Students from these classes will receive college credit for the classes completed, can potentially secure employment using acquired skills, and /or receive community service credit for their work at the college.

We need to take better advantage of available technology to communicate with our students and the community. Our website is out of date and needs to be improved, and we need to use the e-mail and portal systems more effectively.

- D. We expect to continue improving our learning outcomes, and transfer rates for our students, and Vernon Gallegos has expressed interest in exploring the reinstatement of an AA degree in the program.

II. Retention and Growth

- A. To address and respond to the goals of increased access, growth and retention the department has created and revised new curriculum including: Salsa, Dance Appreciation, World Dance, Technical Production for Dance and Theatre, Bay Area Field Trips and Acting for the Camera.

Utilizing funds from measure “C” we purchased new equipment that allows us to convert PE11U for use as a chroma-key video recording studio.

We have continued our recruitment efforts at New Student/Parent Nights and the DeAnza Dancers made outreach performances, on campus, and at local high schools for two spring quarters.

Dance enrollments 05-06 ---1,736	Retention 83%	Theatre: 302	82%
06-07 --- 1,741	83%	276	87%
07-08 --- 1,695	87%	349	85%

Enrollments have gone down slightly in dance, and retention and productivity have improved in both Dance and Theatre.

- B. To address and respond to the goals of increased access, growth and retention for specifically identified populations:

[Dance: Filipino 168	10%	Theatre: 25	7%
Hispanic 207	12%	56	16%
Black 53	3%	16	5%

Compared to

Asia	779	46%	114	33%
White	323	19%	88	25% ]*

We have focused our curriculum. Most of our students are Asian and the students of African ancestry need the most affirmative action in this area. One way the program responded was in the selection of our visiting guest artists. For the last two years they included three male choreographers of African American ancestry, and we collaborated with Filipino guest artist from 4 Elements. The department has also created and revised new curriculum in: Salsa, and World Dance. (\*These statistics reflect very complicated micro-cultural dynamics that may not be manipulated by course offerings alone.)

- C. The Dance/Theatre Department does not directly address basic skills. Our GE classes rely on students having basic skills. Of course the lack of these basic skills has a negative impact on their success rates.

### III. Student Equity

- A. The department has made significant progress in the area of student equity, although there is room for improvement.

	2004-5	2007-8
Filipino	81%	80 %
Hispanic	86%	80 %
Black	88%	81%
Asia	89%	83%
White	85%	73%

The success rates have gone down for all ethnic groups, but if you examine 2007-8, at this point this is closer to student equity than we were 2004-5.

- B. We will continue our efforts of outreach by creating curriculum and programs that are inclusive of our diverse population, and address their needs.
- C. Understanding and predicting the changing social dynamics of these groups in this existential environment.

### IV. Budget Limitations

- A. Because of the particular nature of our program, limited funding would reduce the effectiveness of the program in the areas of instructional quality, community service and civic engagement. Without funds for staffing needed to operate our new facilities, our programs will suffer and the structure will deteriorate.

We need an instructor to teach technical theatre classes so we can generate qualified working crews for our productions.

- B. The consequences would be devastating for the students and the college in general if the program were eliminated or significantly reduced. We would not be able to complete our mission.