

DEPARTMENT OF DANCE
M.F.A. HANDBOOK
2024-2026



California State University, Long Beach

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PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

The Department presents three to five annual concerts featuring undergraduate, graduate, and faculty/guest artist choreography. Concerts provide opportunities to perform in various genres of dance including modern, jazz, ballet, street & club dance, and other dance forms. In addition to regular on-campus dance performances, CSULB annually participates in the activities of the American College Dance Association, which has included performances at regional conferences and the national festival. The Los Angeles Metropolitan area is home to many resident choreographers who offer regional performance opportunities to CSULB students who audition for their work.

GUEST ARTIST RESIDENCIES

The performance repertory of CSULB dancers is kept alive through a successful, long-standing residency program. Every fall and spring term the Dance Department invites a professional guest choreographer to set a new or restaged work on CSULB students. The choreographer usually is in residence 7-10 days, working intensively with their cast. All graduates are highly encouraged to audition for this opportunity and if selected, receive Repertory credit (DANC 595). Once the guest choreographer leaves, a Dance Department faculty member acting as artistic director for that semester rehearses the work through the scheduled performance.

Sidra Bell, Artistic Director Sidra Bell Dance New York
Janis Brenner, Choreographer, New York City
Frank Chaves, Artistic Director, River North Chicago Dance Co.
Leah Cox, Education Director, New York Live Arts Norbert De La Cruz, Choreographer
Mike Esperanza, Choreographer, BARE Dance Company
Melecio Estrella, Bandaloop, Joe Goode Dance
Marjani Fort -Saunders, Choreographer, Co-founder, LOVE|FORT A COLLECTIVE
Maria Gillespie, Artistic Director, Oni Dance, Los Angeles
Kate Hutter, Co-Founder, L.A. Contemporary Dance Company
Laurel Jenkins, Trisha Brown Dance Company
Holly Johnston, Artistic Director, Ledges and Bones Dance Project
Bill T. Jones, Artistic Director, Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance
Zippora Karz, Repetiteur, Balanchine Trust
Alex Ketley, Artistic Director, The Foundry
Sharon Kinney, Repetiteur, Paul Taylor
Stephen Koester, Choreographer, University of Utah, Faculty
Stephanie Lapis, Repetiteur, Doug Varone and Dancers
Fiona Lummis, Repetiteur, Nederlands Dans Theatre
Victoria Marks, Choreographer, U.C.L.A., Faculty
Robert Moses, Artistic Director, Kin Dance Company
Shyamala Moorty, Choreographer
C. Kemal Nance, Choreography, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

John Pennington, Choreographer Pennington Dance Group
Kameron Saunders, Dancer/Choreographer

- B. At least one work or part of a longer work will be a group piece for five or more dancers.
- C. Thesis work must be set on current CSULB dance majors, minors, and/or graduate students.

Possible options for completing the Choreographic Project:

- ◁ **A series of new works** choreographed by the candidate and produced in a graduate concert on campus and/or in digital medium (i.e. screen dance)
- ◁ **A single, longer work** choreographed by the candidate and produced in a graduate concert on campus and/or in a digital medium.
- ◁ **A single work or a series of works** choreographed by the candidate produced by the candidate in **another venue**.

Due to budgetary constraints, the Department can only commit to providing full production support for pieces performed in the MBKDT for up to 35 minutes per candidate. When possible, the Department will accommodate additional production time/support for longer works or offsite venues. Students wishing to present their work in an alternative venue will be responsible for making any necessary arrangements and may incur additional production costs. Candidates who wish to pursue original work in a different medium must demonstrate to the faculty that they have adequate expertise in the chosen medium, and the evidence of competency in the medium. Off-campus, site-specific, or digital/film choreographic proposals must receive approval of the MFA Advisor, Committee Chair, Technical Director, and Department Chair within Department established deadlines to fulfill MFA Choreographic Project requirements.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF CHOREOGRAPHIC PROJECT

As the MFA Degree is a terminal degree and as such is typically considered the final preparation for a professional career in dance as a creative artist and/or educator, choreography will be evaluated by the standards expected of professionals. The Choreographic Project grade will account for 4 out of 6 units of 699 earned as part of the creative portion of the thesis, which will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- ◁ **Concept:** What is the theme or idea of the work overall? Is there a dramatic concept, a movement problem, an expressive ideal, or an exploration of certain formal principles or conceptual issues? Is the concept coherent, clear, and appropriate for the dance? Is the concept original (not in the sense of historic novelty, but in the sense of contributing to the art form and not being solely derivative)?
- ◁ **Development:** Is the concept developed effectively for the work? Are the resources available within the art form used well to develop the concept? Does the form support the content? Does-

individual graduate students receive in a concert. The Graduate Advisor and Concert Director will keep a record of the number of minutes produced and the kinds/amounts of production support allocated to each graduate student as part of their thesis work. The Graduate Advisor, Graduate Concert Director, and Project Committee Chairs will inform candidates if they need to shorten a proposed work or adjust their production elements to allow another candidate to have their work produced.

CASTING

The Choreographic Project Proposal

Choreographers for Graduate Concerts must follow the provisions for participation in Department sponsored events. Dancers are to be chosen by audition and must meet all requirements for performing in Dance Department productions. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the MFA Advisor, MFA Concert Director, and Department Chair.

All dancers performing in Graduate Concerts must:

1. Be Dance Majors, Minors, or graduate students. Proposals for exceptions to this rule must be submitted to the Concert Director, Committee Chair, MFA Advisor, and Department Chair as early as possible. Any auditions for non-department performers must have department approval prior to being held.
2. Be enrolled in a technique class during the semester of the Concert.
3. Have completed their first crew assignment.

Dancers will receive 1 unit of credit for each work in which they perform in a Graduate Concert and may not perform in more than two works in a single concert. Graduate choreographers are responsible for completing performance assessment forms and providing tentative grades for each dancer who appears in their work. The actual student.

SHOWING OF WORKS IN PROGRESS

Candidates should invite their Project Committee members to rehearsals periodically throughout the choreographic process. The scheduling of these visits is the responsibility of the candidates and failure to comply with this requirement may postpone participation in production. In addition, all candidates must present their works-in-progress at two to three MFA Showings. The Graduate Advisor establishes showing dates in collaboration with the Technical and Concert Directors.

The first Works-in-Progress Showing will be held at the end of the third semester of study; the second will be held at the beginning of the fourth semester of study. A possible third showing will be held a week prior to the MFA Spacing Rehearsals. Candidates should have a rough draft of the complete work ready to show by the second showing. Substantial changes to the choreography should not occur after the third showing.

Additional mandatory production meetings will be scheduled by the Technical Director and communicated to the candidates. Additional production deadlines (e.g. submission of final music and video, cue sheets, production costs, and such) will be distributed at the start of the third semester. Failure to adhere to deadlines will lower the project grade and will result in production support being pulled from the project as deemed appropriate by the production staff in consultation with the Concert Director, Committee Chair, and Graduate Advisor.

Candidates should maintain a project journal, including notes on the choreographic/performance process, research conducted, documentation of methodology, copies of rehearsal schedules, costume sketches, fabric swatches, budget, publicity materials, documentation of discussions with the various designers (costume, lighting) theater staff, musicians, copies of programs, and copies of press clippings. It should include notes on the problems encountered throughout the process and how they were addressed. The journal will be most useful if it embodies a sense of development of the choreographic project. Candidates should bring their journals to their post-concert oral evaluations.

THE MFA CHOREOGRAPHIC PROJECT REPORT

COMPOSITION, SUBMISSION, AND APPROVAL OF THE CHOREOGRAPHIC PROJECT REPORT

Candidates are required to complete a written Project Report, as required by University Policy, Details of the Project Report format will be provided during the first year of study by the MFA Advisor and discussed in DANC 570:

Timetable for completing the Choreographic Project Report

1. If a candidate plans to submit the Project Report to the ProQuest Dissertation and Theses database, the candidate must notify the Graduate Advisor by the end of the first week of instruction in the fourth semester of study.port

