Synergy ndeo



NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2026

SYNERGY: Uniting the Field of Dance Education

National Dance Education Organization

National Conference

September 24 - September 27, 2026

SYNERGY:

Uniting to Progress the Field of Dance Education

Dance is, at its heart, a practice in creativity, cooperation, and collaboration.

When dance educators work together, it strengthens the entire dance ecosystem. **NDEO is one of the few dance organizations that serves educators working in every sector of the field**, **and we believe in honoring the synergy between them.** One third of our members teach or work primarily in higher education, one third of our members teach or work primarily in K-12 schools, and one third of our members teach or work primarily in dance studios, community organizations, and teaching artist programs. Regardless of where we teach, dance is our common denominator. When we collaborate together, we move closer to our goal of Dance Education for ALL.

CONNECT. LEARN. DANCE

National Dance Education Organization
301-585-2880
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www.ndeo.org

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Welcome to the Duke City: Albuquerque, New Mexico!

National Dance Institute of New Mexico, on behalf of the NDEO Site Committee, is excited to welcome you to the Land of Enchantment, and we are thrilled for you to experience all that Albuquerque has to offer. This year, Albuquerque is celebrating the centennial anniversary of Route 66, which travels through the heart of the city, with many historic building and landmarks including The Hiland Theater, which now proudly houses NDI New Mexico's after-school dance programming for the community. Albuquerque celebrates its diverse heritage through vibrant institutions including the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque Museum, National Hispanic Cultural Center, New Mexico Philharmonic, and many others, as well as through cultural events such as the International Balloon Fiesta, Globalquerque, and the Festival Flamenco Albuquerque. Alongside the beautiful Native American traditional dances of the Indigenous populations around the state, Albuquerque has a vibrant Flamenco community, boasting the world class American Flamenco Repertory Company, Yjastros, its renowned school, the National Institute of Flamenco. At The University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, students can graduate with a degree in Dance including an emphasis in Flamenco. Adding to the dance community are dance departments at the New Mexico State University, as well as charter high schools for the performing arts including New Mexico School for the Arts, Public Academy of the Performing Arts, and Tierra Adentro of New Mexico. Regional dance companies include Festival Ballet Albuquerque, New Mexico Ballet Company, Keshet Dance Company, and Zeitgeist Dance Theatre. There is a diverse community of dance academies, non-profits, and charter schools serving young dancers K-12, whose students you will see performing at the Kiva Auditorium on September 24th in styles ranging from ballet, contemporary, ballroom, traditional Mexican folklorico, flamenco, jazz and hip hop. The Bus Tour on the pre-conference day will visit various K-12 in-school dance programs that introduce, train, and integrate arts experiences, thus enriching their academic progress in ways that are nurturing to the next generation of artmakers. We can't wait to show off this fraction of all the dance that is being seeded and growing in New Mexico, and hope you have an exhilarating and fulfilling conference in our hometown!

Liz Salganek and Jackie Burns, NDI New Mexico, on behalf of the NDEO Site Committee
Deanna Encinias (National Institute of Flamenco and UNM)**, Ryan McMullen** (NMSU)**, Ana Lopes Archiga** (Keshet Dance and Center for the Arts).

National Dance Education Organization
Advancing Dance Education for All

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Welcome to Albuquerque and the 2026 NDEO National Conference - ***SYNERGY: Uniting to Progress the Field of Dance Education***

Movement is essential. That belief is the reason this organization exists.

Reaching uses the whole body. The foot presses down so the hand can go up. Bowing also recruits collective effort; the ribs sort themselves over the pelvis, and the legs root down into the earth. A jump needs all the tissues coordinating, plus timing. A pause needs everything to suspend. Nothing in the body accomplishes anything by itself.

Neither does anyone making the case for this work. That is why we convene, and it is what Synergy names.

In rooms where dance education is happening, the work is constant and often unseen from outside. What it produces is unmistakable to everyone present. People find out they have agency. They find out their bodies can do more than they thought. They find out that moving together makes something moving alone does not.

At NDEO we help one another build these rooms and carry their miracles forward. We learned how from our own teachers, and we do it for the people who will come after us.

Over the course of this conference, you'll have more than 200 presentations, workshops, and special events to choose from. Many of us work in small clusters, and some of us are the only dance educators in the building. For the next several days we are not. Let’s use that. Ask someone how they assess. Ask someone what they said to the principal who wanted the dance studio for something else. Ask someone how they talked with the parent who wasn't sure if a dance class was the right place for their child. What this field knows is distributed across all of us, and this gathering is where it gets shared.

If this is your first conference, there is a lot on offer here. You won’t be able to absorb it all. Be OK with that, and enjoy the path you carve. It is the right one for you, at this time. If you want some advice on how to make the most of an offering this large, start with NDEO 101: Navigating the Conference on Friday September 25th at 8:30 am in Tesuque.

This conference was curated and considered by volunteers who adjudicated proposals, awards, and scholarships, brought local partners into the work, and gave the time and leadership it took to get it right. Thank a volunteer when you find one.

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I also want to offer a humble thank you to the NDEO staff who make this event, and every day this organization serves its mission, possible: Betsy Loikow, Director of Operations and Organizational Effectiveness; Vilma Rama, Director of Finance and HR; Kaitlynn Schultz, Professional Learning and Events Manager; Shelby Bensinger, Student Programs and Services Manager; and Kari Schrade, Program Coordinator, and our newest addition Maddi Andree, Marketing Coordinator. Thank you as well to our summer interns, Jess Goodwin, Conference Intern, and Kendall Hayes, Marketing and Communications Intern, who brought fresh perspective and real enthusiasm for what NDEO does.



Please thank them when you see them. Then thank them again.

Thank *you* for being here, and for the work you do. Have a great conference!

Ray Eliot Schwartz
Executive Director/CEO
National Dance Education Organization

Welcome to the 2026 NDEO National Conference!

Dear Colleagues, Friends, and Fellow Dance Educators,

Welcome to Albuquerque! It is my great honor and pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 National Dance Education Organization Conference. Set against the vibrant culture, breathtaking landscapes, and rich artistic traditions of New Mexico, I hope this conference inspires you to explore, connect, create, and celebrate alongside colleagues from across the country and around the world. Whether this is your first NDEO conference or you are returning to reconnect with friends and colleagues, thank you for being part of our incredible community. It is because of you, our educators, artists, researchers, advocates, and leaders, that NDEO continues to thrive.

This past year has been one of the most significant in our organization's history. Together, we successfully completed a comprehensive national search for NDEO's new Executive Director. This achievement was made possible through the extraordinary dedication of our Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and National Search Committee, who devoted countless hours to ensuring the future of our organization remained strong. Their thoughtful work, collaborative spirit, and commitment to excellence exemplify what makes NDEO such a remarkable professional home.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to our dedicated staff for the tremendous administrative support they provided throughout the search process. A special thank you goes to Vilma Rama, Director of Finance & Human Resources, whose professionalism, organization, and unwavering support were invaluable from beginning to end. It is with tremendous excitement that I welcome Ray Schwartz as NDEO's Executive Director. Ray has already demonstrated a deep commitment to our members and to the future of dance education. I have thoroughly enjoyed working alongside him, and I look forward to continuing our partnership as together we lead NDEO into an exciting new chapter.

As we gather in Albuquerque, I encourage you to fully embrace all that this conference has to offer. Attend sessions that challenge your thinking, discover new research and innovative teaching practices, reconnect with longtime colleagues, and introduce yourself to someone new. Some of the most meaningful moments at our conference happen in the conversations between sessions, over shared meals, and while celebrating the artistry that brings us together.



Our mission of Dance Education for All continues to guide everything we do. Together, we advocate for our field, support one another, mentor the next generation of dance educators, and ensure that dance remains an essential part of education and our communities. Your passion, creativity, and dedication are what make this organization so extraordinary.

Thank you for being here and for the important work you do every day. I hope you leave Albuquerque inspired, energized, and proud of all that we continue to accomplish together. I wish you a memorable conference filled with learning, meaningful connections, and the joy of dance.

With gratitude and warmest regards,

Julie L. Pentz
President
National Dance Education Organization

Plan Ahead with NDEO!

Join us for our upcoming events:

NDEO National Conference 2027 - Chicago, IL

Friday, November 5 - Sunday, November 7, 2027
pre-conference Intensives Thursday, November 4
Hyatt Regency Chicago | Chicago, IL

Explore our additional offerings to grow your network and expand your knowledge virtually!

Community Meet-Ups
Affinity Groups

Keynote Address

Friday September 25th, 2026

During the Grand Opening Dinner

We are honored to welcome **Catherine Oppenheimer** as a keynote speaker at the **2026 NDEO National Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico**.

From a professional performance career to decades of leadership expanding access to dance and arts education in New Mexico, Catherine's work reflects the power of the arts to shape schools, communities, and lives.

Join us Friday, September 25th, as we gather for our Grand Opening Welcome Dinner, Keynote Address, and Awards Presentation and hear from Catherine as we open an inspiring weekend of learning and connection at **SYNERGY**.



Ms. Oppenheimer danced professionally with New York City Ballet and Twyla Tharp dance companies, before moving to New Mexico in 1994 and founding the National Dance Institute of New Mexico (NDI-NM) as Artistic Director. NDI-NM currently serves nearly 8,000 children each year in public schools. In 2005, Ms. Oppenheimer initiated an effort to create a public, residential high school for the performing and visual arts. New Mexico School for the Arts (NMSA) opened in 2016 with Ms. Oppenheimer serving as its founder and the chairwoman of its public and private boards. In 2021-2022, Ms. Oppenheimer served as President and CEO of Sky Railway, Santa Fe's adventure train. Catherine's work, with many others, has garnered several awards including a National Arts and Humanities Award: a Coming Up Taller Award (NDI-NM, 2003); a United States Department of Education: National Blue Ribbon for closing the achievement gap (NMSA, 2016); a Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts in 2016; and a 2026 Mayor's Award for Excellence in the Arts.

Catherine is a devotee of meditation and a certified Yoga and Pilates instructor. She currently serves as a Trustee of Save the Children and the Exodus Ensemble. She is a lifetime trustee for NDI-NM.

Plenary Workshop

Friday September 25th, 2026 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Champion Native American Hoop Dancer and instructor ShanDien LaRance, alongside her father, Steve LaRance, will introduce participants to the cultural significance, movement, and foundations of Native American Hoop Dance. Through guided instruction, participants will explore basic footwork, rhythm, coordination, and hoop movement while gaining a deeper understanding of hoop dance as a living Indigenous dance tradition and form of cultural expression.



ShanDien Sonwai LaRance is a world-renowned Native American hoop dancer, performing artist, instructor, actor, model, and public speaker. With over 25 years of dance experience, she is proudly Hopi, Tewa, Navajo, and Assiniboine, born and raised in Flagstaff, Arizona, to artists Marian Denipah-LaRance and Steve Wikivia LaRance. Surrounded by Native jewelry, sculpture, painting, ceremony, and community, she was immersed in Indigenous art and culture from birth.

ShanDien began her hoop dance journey at eight years old under the guidance of her older brother, the late Nakotah LaRance, a nine-time World Champion and one of the most influential hoop dancers in history. Performing alongside Nakotah and her younger brother Cree LaRance, she spent her childhood sharing their family's artistic legacy at festivals, conferences, and cultural gatherings throughout the Southwest.

After graduating high school, ShanDien followed in Nakotah's footsteps and ran away to the circus, joining Cirque du Soleil's Big Top show TOTEM as a lead character and cultural performer. Over the next nine years, she completed more than 5,000 performances in over 25 countries, mastering the art of hoop dance and becoming an international cultural ambassador for the Native American and First Peoples communities and nations.

Her career has included performances at some of the world's most prestigious venues and celebrations. She was a featured hoop dancer at the White House Inaugural Native American Heritage Celebration, hosted by Dr. Jill Biden, and she served as a cultural performer at the World Expo 2024 in Osaka, Japan, representing the United States at the U.S. Pavilion. ShanDien has been recognized as a Dance/USA Fellow, performed with the Brooklyn Ballet's Nutcracker, contributed her voice as the Eagle Dancer for Netflix's Spirit Rangers, and headlined the SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market Haute Couture Fashion Show. Her artistry has been showcased at the Miccosukee Arts & Crafts Festival, featured in Lonely Planet's

Plenary Workshop

Friday September 25th, 2026 10:00 am - 11:30 am

Best of Travel: New Mexico Local's Guide, highlighted in the statewide New Mexico True tourism campaign, and brought to the stage as a lead performer in Cirque du Yaateeh. She also serves as the creative director of the Mystic Echoes Indigenous Dinner Show in Santa Fe.

The passing of her brother Nakotah in 2020 profoundly reshaped her purpose. ShanDien returned home with a deeper commitment to honoring his legacy and upholding their family's teachings while uplifting Indigenous communities. She stepped into the role of master instructor, teaching more than 100 Indigenous youth and witnessing many of them grow into champion dancers and cultural performers. Through her mentorship, she watched young Indigenous individuals transform into confident, grounded, and culturally proud members of their communities.

Today, ShanDien's work is rooted in a powerful mission: to reconnect Native American and First Peoples—especially adults—to movement, wellness, cultural identity, and healing through the practice and philosophy of the hoop dance. Her teachings emphasize movement as medicine, fitness grounded in culture, healing through storytelling and motion, and identity shaped through the circle of life.
Guided by tradition and her family's enduring legacy, ShanDien Sonwai LaRance continues to stand as one of the foremost Indigenous performers of her generation, committed to strengthening her community through culture, movement, and the transformative power of the hoop.



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Want to make a difference in the lives of young people?

NDI New Mexico is seeking dance teaching artists to share their talents with students of all ages.





Join a collaborative community of artists inspiring New Mexico's youth to learn, grow, and achieve excellence through dance.

APPLY TODAY!

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Pre-Conference Intensives 2026

Off-Site Intensives

#1: Bus Tour Exploring K-12 School Dance Programs in New Mexico - $90

8:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Facilitated by Liz Salganek and the Albuquerque Site Committee
Bus tour; transportation and box lunch provided.
Registration deadline: August 15, 2026

Welcome to Albuquerque! Educators will have the opportunity to see a variety of K-12 New Mexico dance programs in three different local schools. Albuquerque schools on the tour include public charter schools built around the performing and visual arts; schools that work through the arts-integration model; and schools that combine dance education through partnerships with dance outreach programs and contract teaching artists who work within the school day. Dance education in Albuquerque schools includes such styles as jazz, musical theater, hip hop, ballet, as well as local cultural dance traditions such as Folklorico and Flamenco. Please join us to witness the incredible dance education programs in the state! The tour includes bus transportation and a box lunch.

#3: Flamenco Workshop - $50

8:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Presented by Deanna Encinias
Hosted by the National Institute of Flamenco (transportation provided)
Registration deadline: August 15, 2026

In this workshop we will discover the history of flamenco, explore musical rhythms, analyze traditional flamenco songs, learn a basic dance, and explore how the art form comes together. Flamenco shoes are welcome, although not necessary. Come with a hard-soled shoe with a wide heel, or even tennis shoes. ¡Olé!

Pre-Conference Intensives 2026

On-Site Intensives

#2: Your Leadership Voice: Finding + Amplifying It - $65

9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Presented by Stephanie Simpson, Deborah Damast, Yoav Kaddar, and Elizabeth Kattner

Box lunch provided.

Registration deadline: August 15, 2026

SYNERGY calls us to unite in order to progress the field of dance education. But meaningful unity does not require sameness. It requires leaders who are clear in their voice, grounded in their values, and skilled in how they collaborate across sectors and generations. This full-day pre-conference intensive invites multi-generational dance leaders to clarify their unique leadership voice and strengthen the tools needed to sustain and amplify it. Through reflection, embodied exploration, leadership skill-building, and facilitated "Solution Rooms," we will connect personal insight to collective action. Throughout the day, we will explore leadership as a verb—a way of being that is not tied to title, but expressed through how we collaborate, communicate, and partner with those around us. We will identify the qualities and habits that shape impactful dance leaders and practice practical tools such as coaching-based listening, values-aligned decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving. You will leave with a refined personal Leadership Voice Statement, concrete next steps for advancing your work, and a clear intention for how you will engage the conference experience. Dance is our shared language. Leadership is how we shape its future.**Session timeline will be available to participants closer to the date.

#4: Hypermobility: its impact on balance and learning - $40

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Presented by Allegra Romita and Nancy Romita

What is hypermobility? Hypermobility is often confused with flexibility and dancers may describe it as hyperextended knees, double jointed elbows or fingers, or loose ankles. This session will explore hypermobility and its impact on how a student learns and executes movement. By understanding how your students with hypermobility process movement, it will enable you to cultivate more inclusive spaces for all of your students. This intensive will provide creative solutions to improve stability and resilience in action through Functional Awareness® (FA). FA® is a somatic practice that integrates functional anatomy and motor learning to develop student-centered pedagogical strategies for all students to thrive. Allegra and Nancy Romita will define hypermobility syndrome, describe what it entails, and discuss how understanding it supports movement potential in our students. You will learn and practice a series of specific verbal, auditory, visual, tactile, and proprioceptive strategies to broaden the pathways for success for all movement learners – especially your students with hypermobility.

Pre-Conference Intensives 2026

On-Site Intensives (cont'd)

#5: Tactile Feedback Techniques - $50

11:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Presented by Donna Dragon

Touch or tactile feedback as pedagogy in teaching dance has long been used in dance programs in different contexts. Given the widespread use of touch as a tool in teaching dance and its increasing scrutiny for lacking student consent; potential for misuse; and psychological and professional risks, this session investigates the question, "Where do dance teachers learn tactile feedback techniques?". When used properly, thoughtfully, and skillfully, tactile feedback techniques can serve as powerful, immediate and sometimes needed pedagogic strategies that can enhance students' proprioception; body systems awareness (e.g. musculoskeletal and nervous systems); and kinesthetic awareness (e.g. body part initiation/relationships; core support; alignment; and spatial awareness, etc.). This 3-hour workshop bridges gaps between theoretical guidelines and dance classroom applications by addressing the questions such as the following: What is tactile feedback?; How do we identify when tactile feedback may be useful for a dancer?; What specific hand-on cues for tactile feedback can we employ to engage selected anatomical systems?; Where do we apply tactile feedback with a body?; What are issues with student consent for tactile feedback?; What are alternatives to tactile feedback? Through a variety of learning methods including discussing, reflecting, hands-on learning, observing, and collaborating, you will learn the purposes of tactile feedback and its roles in dance education; practical applications; tangible techniques; communication skills; and alternatives to tactile feedback to foster a teaching/learning environment that values autonomy and interpersonal respect.

#6: Concept to Classroom: Create–Teach-Reflect with Language of Dance® - $50

11:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Presented by Elena Anderson, orchestrated by Susan Gingrasso, Shana Habel, and Jocelyn Lofton

Language of Dance® educators have partnered with Albuquerque dance educator Elana Anderson, Ph.D., to offer an inspiring experience that celebrates creating, teaching, and dancing ideas from distinct movement vocabularies. Working with only six LOD Movement Alphabet concepts, Dr. Anderson will guide the choreographic process and share her approach to making and teaching material within clear parameters. She will teach phrases that reflect her style and discuss how these specific Movement Alphabet concepts shaped her choices as an artist and educator. Participants will explore, create, share, and reflect on how diverse voices can spark innovation, inspiration, and meaningful progress across dance learning environments.

Pre-Conference Intensives 2026

On-Site Intensives (cont'd)

#7: Social-Emotional Learning through Literature and Dance - $40

12:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Presented by Kelly Stokes

In the current school milieu, classroom and special area teachers face new challenges regarding student behavior. In addition to a decline in student learning in reading and math, educators have discovered that students lack basic skills in areas such as civility, kindness, conflict resolution, and self-management. The synergy of dance movement with Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) offers a unique bridge to develop many of these skills. You will experience a series of literature-based dance lessons that explore SEL concepts such as personal space, resilience, mindfulness, and kindness. This intensive will also cover topics such as social-emotional development, effective collaboration strategies, and interdisciplinary approaches. Lessons covered in this intensive were originally aimed at grades K-2 but can be applicable and adapted to any grade/age group and to those with disabilities.

#8 The House Ecosystem: Groove, Footwork, and Flow - $35

12:30 PM - 2:00 PM

Presented by Ryan McMullen

House dance is a living ecosystem built on the synergy of rhythm, community, and individual expression. In this high-energy movement session, we explore the foundational elements of House—the Groove (The Jack), Footwork, and Flow (Lofting)—through the lens of regional Philly-style foundations. Moving beyond rote choreography, this workshop focuses on the "connective tissue" between social dance origins and formal studio/academic training. We will navigate the intricate syncopations of House footwork and the fluid, floor-oriented transitions of lofting, learning how these elements "orchestrate" a complete dancer. Whether you are looking to diversify your K-12 curriculum or enhance a university-level street dance course, you will leave this intensive with a pedagogical toolkit rooted in authentic House culture and the communal spirit of the "Synergy Circle."

#9: Liturgical Dance: Movement for Mind, Body, and Soul - $40

3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Presented by María Daniel

This workshop invites educators, scholars, dancers and practitioners to explore how Liturgical Dance, a sacred African-Diaspora tradition, can serve as a powerful interdisciplinary framework that progresses the field of dance education. In this intensive, you will engage in "mind, body, and soul" movement explorations that encourage dancers to interpret the deep messages of sacred traditions while creating powerful opportunities for storytelling and healing. Liturgical Dance emphasizes polyrhythms, call-and-response, purposeful expression, communal connections, improvisation, and

Pre-Conference Intensives 2026

On-Site Intensives (cont'd)

sacred movements. This session focused on psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs illustrates how culturally rooted traditions can coexist within contemporary academic spaces. In fact, sacred movement practices can enrich curricula across K–12 and higher education by strengthening interdisciplinary connections between dance, music, history, theology, and social-emotional learning. Liturgical Dance techniques and purposeful choreographic strategies can equip educators with tools to guide students in translating psalms, hymns and spiritual songs into purposeful expression. This process fosters critical thinking, cultural literacy, emotional intelligence, and kinesthetic awareness which reflect core competencies in advancing dance education. Through collective exploration, dialogue and communal embodiment, we progress the field of dance education while affirming the rich and historical traditions of African-Diaspora Dance.

#10: Emotional Adultification: Beyond Appropriateness - $45

3:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Presented by Neo Lynch

This intensive introduces emotional adultification as a critical yet underexamined issue in youth dance education, particularly within competitive studio culture. While conversations around hypersexualization and costuming have gained traction, far less attention has been given to the emotional labor demanded of young dancers through choreography centered on adult themes such as grief, trauma, addiction, depression, suicide, and romantic intimacy. This session examines how emotional adultification operates across genres—including lyrical, contemporary, jazz, and hip-hop—and how it is often normalized through Eurocentric aesthetic values. We will explore how children are frequently asked to embody emotional narratives they have not yet developmentally experienced, raising ethical, pedagogical, and equity-based concerns. Through structured analysis, facilitated discussion, and applied choreographic exercises, you will: Identify emotional adultification in choreography, music selection, and performance expectations; Examine how race, genre, and aesthetic bias influence what is deemed "appropriate" or "artistic"; Distinguish between age-appropriate emotional expression and adult emotional projection; Practice alternative choreographic and pedagogical strategies that honor youth development while maintaining artistic rigor. This session is designed to support educators across all sectors who are seeking language, frameworks, and tools to advocate for ethical creative practices, especially within competitive environments where emotional intensity is often rewarded. You will leave with a practical toolkit for assessing emotional appropriateness, reframing choreographic intent, and fostering emotionally sustainable learning environments that align with culturally conscious and developmentally informed teaching practices.

Pre-Conference Intensives 2026

On-Site Intensives (cont'd)

#11: Dance 2050: A Collaborative Working Session - $45

3:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Presented by Kelly Lester and Jessie Levey

This intensive session will engage participants in the application and amplification of the Dance 2050 Vision Statement. We will revisit the original vision, published in 2014, through collaborative analysis, movement exploration, and creative ideation to explore how its themes can be meaningfully applied within current teaching and learning environments. Through facilitated dialogue and structured activities, we will examine the vision's key ideas in light of current shifts in dance education, including evolving student populations, interdisciplinary collaboration, technological change, and expanding career pathways for dancers and dance educators. The session will invite you to reflect on how the aspirations outlined in Dance 2050 continue to resonate, where new questions have emerged, and how educators can collectively advance the vision within their own institutional contexts. Designed as an interactive think tank, the session invites you to contribute to the collective stewardship and ongoing evolution of the Dance 2050 vision.

#12: Somatic Practices for Self-Care - $45

3:00 PM - 5:30 PM

Presented by Susan Bauer

Relax, de-stress, and gain inspiration, all while learning essential somatic skills to teach to your teen and young adult dancers. In this session, you will experience sample somatic movement activities that encourage a more grounded, embodied presence. As educators, focusing on self-care first is essential for our own wellbeing, while enhancing our embodied experience is also central to the ability to teach the material. Presenter Susan Bauer will introduce her "Eight Pedagogy Principles" from her book, The Embodied Teen. The pedagogy principles offer a framework for introducing somatic practices, which can be adapted based on one's particular background and student population. When approached with care, we can benefit from these practices ourselves and learn to skillfully invite young dancers into somatic practices--helping them to thrive, now and into adulthood. Come move, explore, and emerge refreshed for the conference!

Pre-Conference Intensives 2026

On-Site Intensives (cont'd)

#13: Trauma-Informed Somatic Regulation for Teachers & Students - $40

9:00 AM - 11:00 AM

Presented by Martha Eddy

Drawing on decades of somatic movement education, where much stress and moments of unresolved trauma occasionally surfaced, Martha Eddy developed various approaches to seeing the markers of trauma and working to not re-trigger difficult situations. She will introduce three protocols for exploring the impact of what she calls "the Continuum of Stress to Trauma" from Dynamic Embodiment® movement therapy — Be as Big as You Are©, 3D Breathing, and Active Witnessing©. Participants will apply these protocols for regulation within Eddy's EGIC model: Express, Ground, Integrate, Communicate©. Active Witnessing reveals stories of how the body and mind perceive micro and macro stressors, injuries, and held wounds. While deepening breath calms the nervous system, "Being as Big as You" allows for identifying feelings and awakens the desire for safety. Trauma can surface as numbing — the body's protection from what feels like too much. Dance is a critical player in somatic regulation: having a full range of dance dynamics in your lesson can provide opportunities to acknowledge feelings, and when taught with compassion shift moods, frees the bodily flow. Practical co-regulation tools help us recognize dysregulation early, respond with care rather than correction, and rebuild a felt sense of bravery in your classroom/studio.

FOCUS ON THE PROGRAM. NOT THE PAPERWORK.

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– **Amy Marshall,**
Taylor Center for Dance Education



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Because every dancer has a story worth preserving.

Dance Theatre of Harlem Dancers, Theara Ward and Fabian Barnes in Balanchine's "The Four Temperaments." Photo credit: Martha Swope, Courtesy of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

FOR STUDIOS • SCHOOLS • TEACHERS • ORGANIZATIONS

Featured Sessions

Please see the conference schedule and app for scheduling.

NDEO Programs, Board, and Advisory Council

NDEO 101: Conference Orientation
with Julie Pentz and Ray Schwartz

Grounded in this year's theme of Synergy, we invite you to begin your conference experience in connection and community. Join NDEO Board members for an engaging orientation designed to help you navigate the conference with clarity and confidence, make the most of your time, and highlight key aspects you won't want to miss. First-time attendees are especially encouraged to attend—this is your opportunity to start building relationships and momentum from the very first day.

Advisory Council Meet & Connect

Synergy is about the dynamic force we create when leadership and members move in concert. Meet the NDEO Advisory Council—engaged leaders advancing advocacy, mentorship, research, standards, publications, awards, and student initiatives in support of our mission. Come connect, exchange ideas, and discover how your voice and expertise can amplify our collective impact.

Board of Directors Meet & Connect

Synergy is the idea that we are stronger together than we are alone. Join our Board of Directors for an open and welcoming conversation about our shared work, our vision, and the role each of us plays in shaping what comes next. This is an opportunity to build relationships, exchange ideas, and strengthen the alignment that powers our mission.

Honoring Excellence, Sharing Wisdom #1 and #2
with Yauri S. Dalencour

Join Awards Committee Chair Yauri Dalencour and the 2026 National Awards recipients for a panel discussion examining how synergy—the interaction of individuals, programs, and communities to create impact greater than the sum of their separate efforts—can energize dance programs and teaching methods for longevity and success.

Moderated by Yauri, this conversation centers on the gathered wisdom of national award recipients whose careers reflect collaborative leadership and meaningful field-wide impact. Panelists will share insights from building and sustaining successful dance programs, reflecting on their career paths, essential skills, and how cooperative engagement across sectors strengthens both individual practice and the broader dance community. The session will conclude with dedicated time for Q&A and dialogue, inviting participants into the exchange.

Featured Sessions

Continued

K-12 Panel From Resistant to Ready
with Abigail Agresta-Stratton

What do you do to encourage participation from all dancers? How do you help your dancers gain the confidence necessary to participate? How do you gain the trust of the reluctant students? Dance educators will share strategies they have used successfully to help each student become invested in the dance classroom. Build your toolkit for increased classroom participation, confidence, and stronger relationships with students, regardless of their interests or ability levels.

Men in Dance Screening of "When Men Dance"
With Barry Blumenfeld and Yoav Kaddar

Men in Dance group of NDEO will be screening the film “When Men Dance” which follows a group of men from around the globe as they follow the rhythms of their African, Latin, and European roots as they pursue the same dream: to dance professionally and live authentically, defying society’s expectations every step of the way. “When Men Dance” invites audiences into the intimate worlds of a diverse group of young male dancers bound by their passion for movement and self-expression. Behind the artistry lies a complex reality: battles with racism, loneliness, financial strain, and a rising tide of anti-LGBTQ and anti-immigrant sentiment. Straight, gay, and non-binary alike, these dancers reveal the scars they carry—and the courage that keeps them moving. As they prepare for their next performances, each leap and turn becomes an act of defiance, a declaration of identity, and a fight for the right to exist as they are. The screening will be followed by a talkback session with the producers of the film.

NHSDA Info Session
with Shelby Bensinger

Join NDEO Program Coordinator, Shelby Bensinger, to learn more about starting and running a chapter of the National Honor Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA). You will learn about how having a chapter will benefit your students, how to induct students, tips for running your chapter, and more! Join the conversation, ask questions, and get advice!

PK-12 Mentorship Making Dance Learning Visible
with Abigail Agresta-Stratton

How do dance educators clearly articulate what rigorous, student-centered dance learning looks and sounds like? How can dance educators translate the energy, creativity, and collaborative nature of a dance classroom into language that communicates academic depth and intentional practice? And how can we confidently articulate our instructional choices, assessment strategies, and learning objectives to support meaningful evaluation conversations and communicate effectively with others in education who may not have a background in dance? Because many observers and decision-makers may not have experience in dance education, educators must be prepared to name, frame, and contextualize their

work. This session focuses on strengthening our collective ability to communicate the content knowledge, pedagogical decisions, assessment practices, and classroom culture that define high-quality dance education.Participants will explore strategies for describing safe, supportive, and collaborative learning environments; articulating standards-based lesson design; and making visible the rigor and innovation embedded in dance classrooms and leave with language, tools, and confidence to advocate for dance programs and clearly represent the depth and impact of our work. This workshop will empower you to communicate the value of dance education effectively.

State Affiliates Meeting
with Ray Schwartz

This annual meeting provides time for State Affiliate leaders to connect with other affiliates by sharing their recent successes and challenges. NDEO Staff will also be on hand to review current State Affiliate updates in policy and programs. Open ONLY to current State Affiliates. At least one board member from each State Affiliate is required to attend.

What to Publish?: Dance Education in Practice
with Elizabeth McPherson

Facilitators will guide participants through writing and submitting an article to the NDEO journal, Dance Education in Practice (DEiP). We will walk participants through how to use Scholar One, the online platform for authors to submit their work to DEiP. Facilitators will also demystify the editorial process that the DEIP editors, writing mentors, and publisher (Taylor and Francis) follow to move the article from initial draft to publication in the journal. In small groups, attendees will work on developing article ideas. There will be ample time for questions. The session benefits NDEO members by providing them with practical ways to organize their ideas about their practice as dance teachers for publication in DEiP or other journals.

Early Childhood Education Track

Early Childhood Education Special Interest Group
with Nancy Ng

Meet your colleagues who care about the education, health, and well-being of our world's youngest children. Dance educators new to teaching, as well as those who have taught children for decades are welcome to learn from each other. Join the conversation, mingle and dance with peers, and share questions and curricula that inspire your teaching practice now.

DEL Dynamic Collaboration Between Dance Educators and Early Childhood Teachers (Ages 3–5)
with Catherine Gallant and Danielle Staropoli

This session explores the rich potential for collaboration between dance educators and Pre-K, nursery school, and early childhood classroom teachers. The DEL team will share models for identifying existing

classroom curriculum connections and targeting content and materials that support meaningful dance exploration. Participants will experience a range of approaches to collaboratively creating interdisciplinary dance lessons that integrate classroom vocabulary and content while also addressing key developmental needs such as mood regulation, delayed gratification, and relationship building. While the primary focus will be on movement inspired by children's literature, the session will also demonstrate how dance concepts can be integrated into themes from math, science, music, and social-emotional learning. This workshop will…

1. Apply the DEL Dance Framework vocabulary in the early childhood context.
2. Provide examples of DEL's Guided Exploration to support children's natural curiosity with movement discovery.
3. Examine examples of collaboration between dance educators and early childhood educators.
4. Embody and investigate content from children's literature and other subject areas as a foundation for collaboration
5. Model techniques and strategies to enrich early childhood dance classes.

Participants will be provided with related resources and materials to continue their learning and support future collaborations.

From Firebird to Flight: Preschool Creative Ballet
with Terry Goetz

How can poetry take flight in the preschool dance class? Inspired by Misty Copeland's Firebird, participants will experience a Brain-Compatible Dance Education (BCDE) model that layers story, sensation, and structure within a clear five-part lesson plan. Through BrainDance, guided exploration, skill development, creating, and reflection, poetic imagery is translated into developmentally appropriate movement, nurturing imagination while building coordination, focus, and confidence. Participants explore how children's literature, ballet heritage, and dance concepts can come together to create an artistically rich, inclusive preschool class. Bridging studio, school, and community teaching contexts, this session demonstrates how one adaptable five-part learning plan can travel across sectors, offering shared language, developmental progression, and space for self-expression within early childhood dance settings. Participants will leave with renewed confidence in how simple, creative structures can support deep learning and joyful engagement in young dancers.

Letting the Body Speak in the Reggio Way
with Kaoru Ikeda

In U.S. early childhood education, the Reggio Emilia Approach (REA)—originating in post–World War II Italy—has gained broad recognition, especially after a major news magazine named it one of the world's "best preschool approaches" in the 1990s. Still, many educators wonder what the REA truly is and how to meaningfully integrate it into arts-based learning such as creative movement. I was one of those

Featured Sessions

Continued

wandering educators. In 2024, my experience in the International Teacher Study Group in Reggio Emilia, Italy, deepened these questions and sparked an ongoing exploration of how, as a dance educator/teaching artist, I can apply this art-integrated, holistic philosophy to all types of learners.This session introduces the core ideas of the REA and connects them to my work as a movement specialist at a REA-inspired school in New York City. I also reflect on my continuing effort to adapt this culturally responsive, Italian-born approach to New York City's unique social and cultural context.I will also share movement-class examples that embody REA-inspired values such as emergent curriculum, and describe how I collaborate with faculty from different disciplines to support children's learning process. Together, we will consider how creative dance and movement can serve as a meeting point among these approaches, highlighting shared commitments to creativity, collaboration, and holistic development. Participants will leave with a clear overview of the REA and practical strategies for aligning creative movement programs with Reggio principles through collaborative, creative practice. This session is designed for dance educators and teaching artists working with pre-K children who are curious about the REA and how to incorporate creative movement into their curriculum. I will also share how my trip to Italy informed a co-designed unit and lesson plan, developed with other specialists at my school, that centers arts integration as a core expression of REA-inspired practice and brings the wider school community together.

Love Move Play™ - Luna's ECE Framework
with Nancy Ng

Love Move Play™, Luna Dance & Creativity's developmental framework for dance in early childhood education, honors the whole child as they discover and investigate their world through relationships and community, curiosity, and exploring through the moving body. This framework is informed by attachment theory, the basic neurocellular patterns, and the elements of dance. Participants will experience a creative dance lesson which synthesizes these concepts as they relate to the learning theories of constructivism, culturally responsive teaching, and creativity "flow theory". Following the lesson there will be an opportunity for questions and discussion. This session is a taste of Luna's six-week virtual course, "Love Move Play™: Dance in Early Childhood". If you are an educator who wishes to deepen their understanding of the interconnection between child development and dance, this workshop will support you to use children's natural propensity to create, explore, and learn through the moving body.

Featured Sessions

Continued

Community Meet Ups (formerly Special Interest Groups)

These meetings serve as space for dance teachers to network, discuss and share concerns affecting their sector of the field.

Friday 1:05-2:05 PM	Saturday 12:20-1:20 PM	Sunday 12:20-1:20 PM
Higher Education	**K-12 Education**	**Dance Studio Teachers**
Early Childhood	**Dance & Disability**	**Dance Teacher Training**
	Men in Dance	**Leadership**

Affinity Groups

Although allyship and solidarity are valued and appreciated, these meetings are intended for NDEO members who identify as members of the group meeting in order to build community among those members. This is not an educational event for allies. In order to ensure that the Affinity Space remains a place for its members to share openly about their experiences, please do not attend a meeting if you are not a member of the community.

Caregiver Affinity Group Meeting - Friday 5:15-6:25 PM
AAPI Affinity Group Meeting - Saturday 4:30 - 5:40 PM
LGBTQIA+ Affinity Group Meeting - Saturday 4:30 - 5:40 PM
Black Dance Educators Affinity Group Meeting - Sunday 4:30 - 5:40 PM
Disability Affinity Group - Sunday 4:30 - 5:40 PM

Student Sessions

Please see the conference schedule and app for scheduling.

Career Pathways in Dance
with Bradford Chin, Abbey Dubois, Alana Shaw, Morgan Stinnett

This moderated panel of dance education professionals will share about their various corners of the dance education field and their pathways into those experiences. This session is designed for undergraduate and graduate students who are preparing for postgraduate careers in dance education outside of higher education teaching positions/professorships, which are addressed in the "Navigating the Academic Job Market" conference session.

Mental Health Strategies for Students
with Bradford Chin, Julie Lucia, Christie Bondade

This session will share resources and strategies for how students can care for their mental/holistic well-being through the unique stressors of an undergraduate or graduate program in dance. This survey of resources will include some individual and group activity work and will cover a variety of contexts such as creating and enforcing boundaries, seeking mentorship, different approaches to meditation, and leveraging institutional resources for various aspects of your holistic health.

Teaching Ballet in Times of Crisis
with Bradford Chin, Marisa Castillo, Alaina Wilson

During this ongoing period of societal tumult and widespread harm, how does one approach the teaching of ballet and its centuries-long history of exclusion? Building on the work many educators have already done to make ballet more inclusive, this moderated panel discussion explores what educators are doing now to address ballet's inescapable politics (of being), foster more inclusive and accessible ballet learning environments, and use ballet as teaching/learning experience that is relevant for our current times of crisis.

Navigating Graduate Dance Program Applications
with Bradford Chin, Reign Capers

This moderated panel of graduate program faculty members and current/recently graduated graduate students will shed light on the different components of researching, applying to, and selecting a graduate program. This session is designed for attendees who are considering applying to a graduate program in dance.

Navigating the Academic Job Market
with Bradford Chin

This moderated panel of faculty members who have recently participated in the academic job market process will shed light on the various aspects of the academic job market, including the different types of positions and institutions, application components, the interview process, and job offer negotiations. This session is designed for attendees who are currently on or preparing to enter the academic job market.

Thank You To Our Student Volunteers!

Jacee Anderson - Arizona State University

Briana Becerril - New Mexico State University

Madeleine Birmingham - The University of Texas at Austin

Nicole Carbone - Towson University

Bethany Ciaccio - New Mexico State University

Adia Edmondson - New York University

Caitlin Garcia - Brigham Young University

Jahnia Leslie - University of North Carolina at Charlotte

Cariann Missling - West Virginia University

Antonella Palma - New Mexico State University

Natalie Penn - West Virginia University

Robin Rhodes - Texas Tech University

Andie Richardson - University of Georgia

Lauren Riggenbach - West Virginia University

Grace Rogers - Texas A&M University

Anna Jane Self - University of Georgia

Kenya Smith - California State University Long Beach

Rebecca Taylor - Towson University

Emma Vondran - West Virginia University

Poster Presentation Sessions

Friday, September 25, 2026 - 5:30pm - 7:00pm

Poster Presentations highlight a wide range of dance education topics, research findings, and teaching approaches. During this session, presenters will share their research, teaching strategies, and insights through posters—visual representations of their work—and engage in informal dialogue with conference attendees. Attendees are invited to move around the session, taking in the unique perspectives of each poster presentation, and to ask questions of the presenters.

"Using Progressing Ballet Technique for Injury Prevention"
with Abby Ball

My poster examines the effects of Progressing Ballet Technique as a strengthening and conditioning method incorporated into a beginner ballet class. With background research on the prevalence of injuries in ballet, I looked at what was missing in the typical structure of ballet classes and added additional strength training, then measured the outcome. Using PBT as a conditioning method includes ballet technique while improving strength and muscle memory. It is a dance based training program, that I found to be successful with my students.

"Juvenile Fibromyalgia & Creative Dance"
with Giovanna Carchia

Roughly 25% of children suffer from chronic pain (NIH). This research examines how creative dance practices may improve the quality of life for children ages 10-11 living with juvenile fibromyalgia (JF). Without effective treatment, JF can have lasting negative social, emotional, and intellectual impacts. Drawing from peer-reviewed literature in creative dance, dance education, psychology, pediatrics, physiology, and physical therapy, this study examines: How can dance educators use creative dance pedagogy and concepts to create safe, individualized movement experiences in diverse dance environments for children who have JF or chronic pain? This research proposes approaches to creative dance that can encourage physical activity, strengthen mind-body connections, increase bodily awareness, and provide accessible strategies for managing chronic pain that support holistic well-being.

"The Attention Studio: Dance Pedagogy as Attention Practice"
with Alexander Davis

This poster examines what happens when we name dance pedagogy as attention practice. Drawing on Yves Citton's Ecology of Attention and the work being done by the Friends of Attention and the Strother School of Radical Attention (SoRA), it presents strategies from the author's studio teaching at Dean College (Composition, Improvisation, Contemporary Technique) that reframe the dance studio as a site for cultivating collective attention amid the pervasive fracking of attention. Rather than treating distraction as a problem to solve, these approaches treat attention as choreographic material: scored, redirected, and distributed across bodies in space. The poster enacts its own argument, asking attendees to practice attention rather than passively consume information. Grounded in a higher education context, the poster offers alternatives beyond behavioral management and digital restriction.

"Evaluating the Role of Dance in Neurological Development using Magnetic Resonance Elastography"
with Kayley Hart

To dance means to understand the rhythm of music, have control over the human body, and memorize choreography along the way. All of these aspects are controlled by different regions of the brain. This study aims to identify if there are differences between the dancer and the non-dancer

Poster Presentation Sessions

brain. 10 female subjects, 5 dancers and 5 non-dancers, underwent a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan with components of magnetic resonance elastography (MRE) and arterial spin labeling (ASL). After evaluating the stiffness of the brain tissue and the amount of blood flow through specific regions, t-tests were run for comparison. Conclusions were drawn with some significant regions of difference in stiffness as well as significance in whole-brain stiffness, with dancers having higher brain stiffness than non-dancers. Overall, this preliminary study allows for hypotheses that dance may benefit neurological development at large.

"How Tap Dancers today keep history as a part of their practices and teachings"
with McKenna Johnston

This poster teaches how tap dancers keep history as a part of their practices and teachings and why. It is a summary of my paper I made by interviewing tappers today (Jane Goldberg, Acia Grey, Katherine Kramer, Kaleena Miller, and Michael Love). It talks about their ways of weaving history in their teachings while innovating in this field. Thesis statement: Even though there are several ways to share tap history, tap teachers today have a responsibility to create living and moving history lessons that connect movement, knowledge, and a foundation of information to build and develop off of.

"Co-Choreographing Agency: Collaborative Process in Dance Higher Education"
with Nina Kossler

This poster presents a four-step collaborative choreographic framework that guides students through critical inquiry, movement generation, collaborative refinement, and shared authorship. The session introduces dance educators to a collaborative process in which students' experiences, perspectives, and worldviews directly inform movement creation and performance. Participants will learn how co-creating dance can foster empathy, critical reflection, and action-oriented artistry through specific examples in choreographic research. Through my choreographic research and my dance pedagogy, I have found in my experiences in higher education that a lot of the choreographic processes and pedagogy surrounding choreography focus on methods that don't always consider the application of collaborative dance making to real life professional dance processes, and the skills students learn about how to lead their own choreographic processes do not always translate to the choreographic processes they are involved with as performers. My research as a choreographer and educator attempts to bridge this gap between developing the artistic voices of undergraduate student performers through critical engagement with the choreographic research process. In this poster presentation, I highlight practical approaches for engaging students as collaborators; empowering them develop agency and make creative decisions and examine how empathy-driven choreography can not only amplify student voice and agency but also foster inclusivity and unite communities in shared purpose.

"Embodied Language: Dance as a Pathway to ESL Acquisition"
with Charlotte Lilly Lobben

How can dance support English language acquisition in multilingual classrooms? This poster explores dance as an embodied, creative approach to Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), emphasizing how movement can enhance vocabulary retention, comprehension, and confidence through embodied cognition. Attendees will examine practical teaching strategies including kinesthetic storytelling, spoken word choreography, culturally responsive dance forms, and expanded approaches to Total Physical Response (TPR) that move beyond simple commands into expressive movement experiences. The poster highlights how dance reduces language anxiety, increases engagement, and supports kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learning styles, offering educators adaptable

Poster Presentation Sessions

practices for fostering language development, creativity, and intercultural understanding.

“Dance for Healthy Aging”
with Mackenzie Losch

My poster will be about my research I have conducted for my Honors Thesis. My topic is how dance, specifically Dance Movement Therapy, can be used to promote healthy aging and serve as a preventive measure against developing age-related diseases for elderly populations. The three domains of health that are emphasized are physical health, mental health, and cognitive functioning. Background research and original research were used for this thesis.

“Campus Dance Performance Groups: Student Involvement Positively Impact Belonging and Retention “
with Meghan McLyman

This study was conducted to expand the scope of available data and assess the impact of participation in college dance performance groups on students. Existing academic data tools track enrollment trends for students registered in dance courses; however, they do not account for those involved in campus performance groups for non-credit purposes, such as extracurricular participation rather than fulfillment of major, minor, or general education requirements. Consequently, the data currently used to evaluate the Dance Program's impact does not fully capture student interest, involvement, or engagement. During the fall 2024 semester, three surveys were administered to students participating in four campus dance performance groups at one college. A majority of respondents reported that their involvement helped them build friendships and foster a sense of community, which positively influenced their sense of belonging on campus. Students also attributed improvements in their academic performance and overall success to these experiences.

“How The AIDS Epidemic Impacted the Club/House Dance Scene”
with Ellie Meyer

My poster goes into detail on how the AIDS epidemic in the 80's had a strong impact on how dancing in clubs changed. There are many sociopolitical and discriminatory factors that led the club scene to become what it is now. The poster/research takes quotes and experiences directly from queer people of color who frequently attended dance clubs in the 80's and shaped styles such as House Dance, Hip-Hop, Voguing, and more.

“Thinking in Motion”
with Eleanor Raygorodsky

This poster explores how inquiry-based teaching practices can deepen learning in dance education by fostering critical thinking, creativity, reflection, and embodied understanding. Drawing from dance pedagogy and interdisciplinary research, the project examines how questioning, observation, dialogue, and movement exploration can become active components of dance instruction.Rather than treating dance solely as technical or physical training, the approach positions movement as a form of inquiry through which students investigate ideas related to perception, space, time, creativity, and meaning-making. Introducing inquiry-based practices alongside movement training from the earliest stages of dance education allows students to develop intellectual engagement, artistic understanding, and creative agency simultaneously.The framework integrates interdisciplinary arts learning, encouraging students to connect dance with visual art, music, design, and other creative disciplines as part of their creative and reflective process. Practical classroom strategies, creative movement activities, and interdisciplinary teaching methods are presented that support students in thinking through movement, constructing meaning, and engaging

Poster Presentation Sessions

deeply with dance as both an artistic and intellectual practice.

"Dance, Advocacy, and Community Impact: Using Dance to Support Domestic Violence Prevention"
with Andie Richardson

This poster highlights my participation in Dancing with the Athens Stars, a community-based fundraising event benefiting Project Safe, a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending domestic violence through prevention, intervention, education, and advocacy. As a dance student and instructor, I partnered with a local community leader to choreograph and teach a hip-hop dance performance for the event. The poster will explore how dance can serve as a means of community engagement, social advocacy, and civic participation. It will look at how the collaborative process between instructor and participant, the role of dance in supporting nonprofit work, and the educational value of applying dance education in a community setting. Through photographs, reflections, and outcomes, the poster will demonstrate how dance education can go beyond traditional performance spaces to create community partnerships and contribute to social change.

"Qualifications and Standards of Private Dance Studio Teachers and Owners"
with Grace Rogers

The purpose of this study is to research private dance studio teachers and owners standards and qualifications. This study will investigate the current qualifications and training of private dance studio teachers and the hiring process that the dance studio owners use. Using a survey study and one-on-one interviews, we will be able to identify where the qualifications are currently at and analyze them to find a way to elevate the private dance studio standards.

"Dance, Disability, & Discrimination"
with Kailey Samarel

My poster session will incorporate information regarding discrimination against dancers with disabilities. You will gain knowledge on ableism, student rights, inclusion, interventions, advocacy, and research among the topic of dance and disability. You will then learn as an educator what to incorporate into your programs to help combat the narrative that dance is only for able bodies. These include consistently checking in, providing accommodating assignments, giving artistic expression, offering opportunities, having expectations, setting up meetings, etc. I will elaborate on HOW and WHY we can do these things as educators. This is important to clarify because it is crucial to understand in order to truly help your students. The main point is to spread awareness on this topic and prevent the damage that has been done and is currently being done to these vulnerable students.

"Musical Theater Pedagogy Through the Ages"
with Anna Jane Self

My poster is a breakdown and comparison of my experience teaching choreography for Seussical the Musical to students at Dove Creek Middle School at the same time as teaching choreography for Evil Dead the Musical to students from the University of Georgia's theater program. I will be discussing my teaching methods for teaching non dancers and dancers a like to move, play, and connect.

"The Benefit of Dance as a Therapy for Aging Adults"
with Carroll Ann Shackleford

Within my poster, I will highlight the disparities experienced by aging adults, and the ways in which such disparities can be addressed through dance. Having Dance Movement Therapy available to the aging population increases social opportunities and movement-based activities, combating the natural loss of muscle and the isolation seen in the aging community. Neurodegenerative disorders are studied within the field of both psychology and biology, as they reflect a dysfunction in the brain that

Poster Presentation Sessions

causes movement to decline. Within this project, I hope to display an in-depth knowledge on how dance can be used as a form of therapy, specifically for older adults. I will display this knowledge through both research and individual exploration, creating an interactive session for those interested in teaching special populations. This session focuses specifically on teaching older adults with neurodegenerative disorders, as this increases the movement restrictions within the dancer. Dance for Parkinson's is a form of movement therapy that stimulates the brain, increases flexibility and balance, and engages participants in social activities. I will be attending a Dance for Parkinson's workshop funded by Western Kentucky University to expand my knowledge within teaching populations with disabilities. Through this experience, I will compile interview questions for the instructors of this course to best understand their perspective on the benefits of dance. Such questions and observations will be displayed during my session and applied to the overarching research question: how can dance combat the sedentary lifestyle of older adults? By understanding the benefits of DMT, psychologists and clinicians could potentially implement more creative forms of therapy into their practice. By having a therapy focused on challenging physical and cognitive abilities, regulating emotions, and socialization, more of a client's needs could be met through a single type of therapy. Through a more hands-on experience, I will also utilize my training by partnering with WKU's student chapter of NDEO and developing a dance class to teach at a local retirement home in Bowling. Such findings, curricula, and integrations will be recorded and displayed during my session. This will be available for attendees to observe, allowing for questions regarding the success and benefits of the movement class on the aging community. Overall, the session will combine current research in aging with hands-on implementation of teaching older adults, making available the benefits of movement on the symptoms of aging.

“Aerial Arts and Dance Improvisation: A Creative Synergy”

with Elizabeth Stich

As many dance studios, high schools, and higher education institutions begin to add aerial arts to course offerings, this presentation offers practical guidance and theoretical context for incorporating dance improvisation into the aerial classroom. Many are drawn to aerial arts initially for the physical challenge. Yet sustainment of long-term engagement often involves a deeper connection with the artistic aspects of the form. Drawing on Amabile's (1996) componential model of creativity, improvisation allows aerialists to practice both domain-relevant skills (e.g. aerial technique, the ability to recognize, embody, and use elemental movement concepts) and creativity-relevant skills (e.g. engaging with uncertainty, problem solving, problem finding). To train these skills, I have curated, adapted, and developed a series of improvisation structures for a novel context in the air.

“The Dance Moms Effect: Competitive Dance Media's Influence on K–12 Dance Education”

with Toni Wuest

Thesis, analysis, and how to intentionally approach dance teaching moving forward.

Conference Vendors

Visit our vendors in person in La Sala

Friday September 25th - Saturday September 26th from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Also, be sure to check out their profile on our Conference App.

2026 National Conference Vendors:

- 92NY Dance Education Laboratory
- Arnhold Graduate Dance Education Program at Hunter College
- Bates Dance Festival
- ChromaDiverse
- Covet Dance
- DACI
- DA:NCE Awareness
- Dancing Classrooms
- Dance Curriculum Designs
- Dance for Schools
- Dean College
- FDEO
- From the Top
- Harlequin Floors
- Human Kinetics
- Ludus
- Mabels Labels
- Mettler Studios
- Montclair State University
- NDI Collaborative for Teaching & Learning
- NDI New Mexico
- Niminye Consulting and Coaching
- New York University Steinhardt Dance Education Program
- Oakland University
- P3 Talent Competition
- Recital Ready
- Rutgers
- Teachers College, Columbia University
- Technovation
- Thelma's Tap Notes
- University of Northern Colorado
- University of Texas at El Paso Department of Theatre and Dance

2026 National Conference Sponsors

CONNECT Sponsor: NDI New Mexico

LEARN Sponsor: Dance for Schools

Scholars Corner

Visit our Scholar's Corner book display in La Sala:

Friday September 25th - Saturday September 26th from 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Also, be sure to check out these books on our Conference App. If you'd like to learn more about any of the titles listed please use our QR code on this page to shop!
You can also visit some of the authors at the table for signing and/or questions on Friday and Saturday. See Conference App for specific times.

- *"The Anatomy of Art" - Alexandra Beller*
- *The Embodied Teen" - Susan Bauer*
- *"Dynamic Bodies: A Framework for Somatic Engagement in Dance and Movement" - Elizabeth Shea*
- *"The Dance of Everyday Movement: A Developmental Framework for Whole-Body Integration" - Luc Vanier*
- *"Thinking with the Dancing Brain"* - Sandra Minton and Rima Faber
- *"Mindful Movement"* - Martha Eddy
- *"Dance Research Methodologies: Ethics, Orientations, and Practices"* - Rosemary Candelario and Matthew Henley
- *"The Intellect Handbook of Dance Education Research (2025) Intellect Press"* - Edited by Lynnette Young Overby, Billie Lepczyk and Jill Green

Learn More

Artists Market

Stop by and visit the following local artists on Sunday September 27th and buy local handmade arts and crafts

505 Ground Collections

Alvin Shaw

Bea Aguilar

BROWN BEAR GALLERY & GIFTS

Cassy's Arts and Craft

Crafted by Mark

Dreamcatchers by Carol Padilla

Dreano Jewelry

Eva Pottery

Gertrude Zachary Jewelry

JMohr

Kokopelli Design Studio

Lovato Creations

Miitsi Pottery

Nception



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Session Descriptions

A

A Flamenco Snapshot: History, Movement, Connection

Melonie Grasty-Vazquez

Participants will learn a brief history of the development of flamenco and why it is a hybrid dance from many cultures. Participants will also gain a different perspective of a dance form that makes connections globally. After learning the what and why flamenco, participants will make connections with rhythms, music, and movements from their world to the flamenco world then back to their world now changed. Basic steps, movement and a bit of choreography will be learned and music will reflect traditional flamenco as well as other popular genres. The class is intended for those who teach dance but want to add something else to their curriculum and/or broaden the scope of dance to their students. Participants will feel more confident about flamenco, have made connections with the dance to other known dance forms and will have a more understanding of how we are all connected through dance.

Adapting Your Class for Dancers With Hypermobility

Alyssa Caliendo

Hypermobility is often seen as an asset in dance, yet without proper support it can become a major source of injury. When dancers knowingly or unknowingly fall within the hypermobility spectrum, it's vital for instructors to understand how to train their bodies safely and effectively to ensure long-term success. In this workshop, strength coach, dancer, aerialist, and movement educator, Alyssa Caliendo (CSCS), will break down hypermobility and how to identify common movement patterns seen in hypermobile dancers. Then, attendees will learn practical cueing strategies, progression modifications, specific warm up exercises, and strength-building approaches to help dancers stay pain free. This session will empower dance educators to create safer, more inclusive classrooms where hypermobile dancers can thrive throughout their careers.

Advisory Council Meet & Connect

Julie L. Pentz

Synergy is about the dynamic force we create when leadership and members move in concert. Meet the NDEO Advisory Council—engaged leaders advancing advocacy, mentorship, research, standards, publications, awards, and student initiatives in support of our mission. Come connect, exchange ideas, and discover how your voice and expertise can amplify our collective impact.

Afro-Caribbean & Afro-Latin Dance Pedagogies

Katherine Jiménez, Careitha Davis

This movement-based workshop invites participants into an embodied exploration of Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin dance as living pedagogies. Movement practices that carry cultural knowledge, history, and social meaning beyond technique alone. Framed as diasporic dialogues, the session explores how dance transmits knowledge across communities, generations, and geographies. Led by New York–based dance educators Careitha Davis and Katherine Jiménez, the workshop centers dances from the Caribbean and Latin America as dynamic diasporic forms shaped by community, migration, and cultural continuity.Participants will actively engage in foundational movements and rhythmic structures from Afro-Caribbean traditions, with a focus on New York Style Mambo (Salsa On2). Related forms such as Cha

Cha Chá, Boogaloo, and Latin Jazz will be referenced to highlight musical and cultural connections. Caribbean movement exploration will include Soca, with ties to West African and traditional Caribbean practices. Through guided movement, rhythm work, and brief contextual discussions, attendees experience how culture and history live within the body. Designed for K–12 educators, higher education faculty, and dance education students, this session offers adaptable strategies for a range of learning environments. Rather than emphasizing stylistic replication, the workshop prioritizes inquiry, musicality, and relational learning. Participants explore call-and-response structures, groundedness, and polyrhythmic awareness while considering how these principles inform culturally responsive teaching. Attendees will leave with practical tools for teaching beyond steps, including movement frameworks, discussion prompts, and reflective practices that support inclusive and rigorous dance education. Centering respect, cultural grounding, and joy, this session creates space to move, learn, and connect through Afro-Caribbean and Afro-Latin traditions while gaining pedagogical strategies applicable to diverse classrooms and studios.

Afrodance is the dance, Afrobeats is the music.
Ishmael Konney
This session explores the dynamic evolution of Afrodance as a street/popular style of dance in Africa. We will explore movements from Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Congo and Ivory Coast as the leading creators of Afrodance. The session will emphasize the communal experience Afrodance fosters, particularly through the learning and performance of group phrases, showcasing its power to unite and energize communities. Hip hop and other African American dance forms were heavily influenced by dances from Africa. Hip hop gave back to the continent of Africa by influencing the creation of Africa's street form "Afrodance". This session highlights the dynamic, ongoing exchange between Black dance forms in the United States and Africa, illustrating how shared rhythms and movement vocabularies continue to shape contemporary identities and communities. As a movement-based workshop, participants will learn and practice sequences across the floor before incorporating them into larger phrase work. Historical and cultural context for Afrodance will be woven throughout the session to help participants situate the movement practices within their origins and contemporary significance.

Aging with Strength and Grace through Movement
Jennifer Sommers
Participants will experience a movement class for older adults, with and without disability, that engages them physically, cognitively, emotionally and socially. The presenters, both experienced Dance for Parkinson's teachers, will model a class and adaptations for use in a variety of community settings.

AI as a Reflective Tool in Somatic Dance Education
Luc Vanier, Elizabeth Johnson
Artificial intelligence is entering dance education—but how can it support rather than undermine embodied practice? This experiential workshop presents a working AI-assisted movement prototype grounded in a somatic and developmental framework. Rather than evaluating correctness or ranking performance, the tool visualizes coordination patterns that students can interpret for themselves. Through guided movement exploration and demonstration, participants will compare internal sensation with visual feedback and

consider how technology can function as a reflective mirror rather than an evaluative authority. The session offers practical strategies for integrating AI tools in ways that strengthen student agency, ethical practice, and embodied awareness.

Archive to Action: Embodied Dance History
Amber Wade, Lynne Larson
Struggling to make modern dance history relevant and embodied for your students? This interactive session demonstrates a proven partnership model between Repertory Dance Theatre (RDT) and classroom educators that transforms archival materials into student-driven learning. Co-presenters Lynne Larson (RDT Education Director) and Amber T. Wade (secondary dance educator) will share a collaboration that bridges professional company resources and classroom practice. You'll experience a condensed version of the Passport workshop hosted by RDT into the student journey: engaging with historical context through multimedia materials, exploring movement vocabulary from pioneers like Isadora Duncan through José Limón to postmodern innovators like Viola Farber and creating original choreography that reflects historical understanding. This scaffolded approach provides multiple entry points for learners, moving beyond lecture-based history to kinesthetic exploration. Participants will receive practical takeaways including lesson plans, assessment rubrics, and strategies for building similar partnerships with professional companies in their own communities —regardless of geographic location or institutional resources.Leave equipped with a replicable framework that brings professional-quality dance history education to all students, utilizing freely accessible resources like RDT's Dance to Learn website and adaptable partnership structures for K-12 classrooms, studios, and pre-professional programs.

B

Bailes de Salón
Lucy Salazar
Bailes de Salón are traditional Folk Dances that have been done by Nuevomexicanos in Northern New Mexico and Southern Colorado for generations. The dance styles include polka, shotish and waltz (polka, chotis and valse). I learned these dances from my parents and grandparents as they were performed when I was a child. We lived in rural New Mexico before there was electricity available and these dances were done at local dance halls or private homes for all community celebrations. My father, grandfather and uncles were all musicians and my earliest memories were of watching and dancing by kerosene lamps. It has been my passion to preserve these dances that are a dying art form. I have worked through the New Mexico Arts Division Artist in the Schools Program and the Master/Apprenticeship Program in this effort. I have offered classes at the National Hispanic Cultural Center and The Albuquerque Folk Festival. I present these dances as they were taught to me and include live musicians to complete the feel of a "Baile" or dance. They are done in partners or groups of three or four dancers. The Cuadrillas are done with four couples in the style of a Quadrille.

Ballet & BrainDance
Terry Goetz
This experiential session explores how the BrainDance can serve as a holistic, developmentally informed foundation for ballet training. Participants will move through a

sample ballet class that integrates the BrainDance as an embodied warm-up, preparing the body and brain for a student-centered approach to technique. A five-part lesson plan—warming up, exploring dance concepts, developing skills, creating, and cooling down—uses the elements of dance, creativity, and reflection to cultivate agency and artistry. The BrainDance sequences through fundamental movement patterns that support total body organization. The first four patterns—Breath, Tactile, Core–Distal, and Head–Tail—form the foundation for breath support, sensory awareness, core–limb connectivity, and spinal mobility. The second four patterns—Upper–Lower, Body–Side, Cross–Lateral, and Vestibular—relate more directly to technical aspects of ballet, supporting clarity in movements such as pliés, port de bras, tendus, traveling steps, jumps, and turns. Experience how these developmental patterns can be woven throughout a ballet class to deepen understanding of technique. Barre and center combinations will highlight connections between BrainDance patterns and ballet steps, offering accessible ways to cue movement. Using clear, descriptive terminology rooted in how the body organizes, alongside traditional vocabulary, can make technique more inclusive and meaningful for a wide range of learners. The session will also use the BrainDance as a jumping-off point for guided improvisation and collaborative dance-making, demonstrating how these patterns can enrich creative process and artistic expression. You will leave with practical strategies for incorporating the BrainDance as a healthy and efficient warm-up, using BrainDance-based cueing to clarify technique, and creating ballet classes that balance technical development with expressivity and a sense of belonging.

Ballet for everybody

Cari Freiberger

In this movement session, come as you are and experience a ballet class that meets you right where you are. At the heart of ballet one can find freedom and connection to music and personal artistry while exploring joyfulness in a judgement free zone. The class invites all your ages and stages and celebrates each person's unique beauty. No matter your relationship to ballet, if you want to dance in a ballet class at this conference, this is your session. We will work through an open, fun, ballet class while holding space for some of the important questions surrounding this dance style. How can we structure our classes to be liberating places for all to explore? Why in this moment in time are there still exclusive restrictions on dance classes? And most importantly, what is holding us back as teachers in our own dance practices? If working together and building each other up, ballet class can be a supportive and wonderful space to connect with ourselves and those around.

Bashi Arts: Afro-Contemporary Improvisation

Enya-Kalia Jordan

This movement session immerses participants in the Bashi Arts methodology for teaching dance to students of all ages and across all settings. Grounded in Africanist aesthetics, Black feminist pedagogies, and Disability Justice principles, the Bashi Arts methodology for teaching dance embraces a radically accessible approach to dance pedagogy. This movement session guides participants through an improvisational dance class, which begins with an access check-in and sensory-based postmodern warm-up. The class then moves into facilitated explorations and improvisational tasks rooted in African Diasporic techniques, pedagogies, practices, and aesthetics, and uses access-based frameworks

such as audio description and verbal instruction. This session will close with a cool-down and time to share reflections and questions.

Bearing Witness to Whiteness in American Dance

Julie Kerr-Berry, Carlos R.A. Jones

This workshop session will focus on bearing witness to whiteness in American dance. Its aim is to tell the truth about the buried and flawed narratives in our danced history. The session's focus is broad, interdisciplinary, and incorporates a variety of American dance focusing on the late nineteenth century through the present. It drills down to specific dimensions of dance from Post-Reconstruction to the present, pivoting around major constructs such as whiteness, race/racism, White-body dancing supremacy, cultural misappropriation, settler colonialism, and anti-blackness. The workshop addresses the conferences' focus of "synergy" through its approach to the subject matter and its mode of delivery. Under the same title as the workshop, it is also slated to be published as a book this year. Part one of the workshop will unfold as a conversation between another scholar and myself in the field of dance education who is versed in my research and teaching. Thus, this segment of the session is synergistic because it honors the space between us as major themes are introduced and discussed. Another synergistic element is that content deconstructs whiteness by employing multiple fields of study from dance education, critical dance studies, critical pedagogy, queer studies, and sociology, among others. The session's major themes parallel chapters in the book: 1) the correlation between primitivist appropriation and early modernism; 2) dancing the Other in concert dance; 3) social dance and its parallel to social change; 4) queer dance's push back against White patriarchal repressive conditioning; 5) danced frictions in American body politics, or, "flesh fights"; and 6) ending with the question: "Where do we dance from here?" However, my aim is not to present the book, but rather its ideas as they are grappled with by the presenters and witnessed by attendees. Part two of the workshop presents salient examples from my college classes because it was the teaching of this subject matter that laid the groundwork for this book. Thus, there is also a synergistic relationship between pedagogic practice and research. Next, participants will have opportunities to apply content to their teaching practice. In preparation, I will provide entry points for such application. For example, number six above could serve as a jumping off place for participants to connect content to pedagogy. Several multi-disciplinary references will be provided as well. The uniting of interdisciplinary research, teaching, and collaboration with fellow dance educators are collectively aimed at progress in our field.

Beyond "Helping" Touch: Consent, Power, and Access

Brandy Mimms

Beyond "Helping" Touch: Consent, Power, and Access in DeafBlind Dance is an experiential workshop grounded in my lived experience as the first Black DeafBlind professional dancer, choreographer, and educator. This session invites participants into a rarely represented perspective that challenges dominant assumptions about how dance is taught, accessed, and embodied within educational and professional settings. In many dance spaces, touch is treated as a universal form of assistance. For me, as a Black DeafBlind woman, unsolicited touch is not helping—it is a violation of consent, culture, and bodily autonomy. This workshop examines how well-intentioned

practices can reinforce power imbalances and exclusion and explores what becomes possible when access is centered as a foundational teaching practice rather than an afterthought. Through guided reflection, optional experiential activities, and movement-based demonstrations, participants engage with consent-centered practices, alternative communication methods, and sensory-based access tools such as tactile cueing and collaborative movement building. These strategies are modeled through lived, embodied practice and are designed to be adaptable across K–12 schools, higher education, studios, and community dance environments. Storytelling, applied examples, and participant engagement invite educators to critically reconsider ideas of power, help, and agency in the classroom and studio. Participants will leave with three to five practical strategies they can immediately implement to support access without assumption, strengthen consent practices, and foster more equitable learning environments. This session is not simply about including disabled dancers; it is about shifting whose knowledge is valued, who holds authority, and how access is built with dancers rather than for them. Participants are challenged to move beyond accommodation toward co-creation, recognizing access as a shared responsibility and a powerful creative practice that benefits all learners.

Beyond the Screen: Who Owns The Dance?

Darryl Pilate II

In an era dominated by TikTok, Reels, and Snapchat, the "dance challenge" has become a universal language for the modern mover. These viral moments, sparked by social media influencers, offer a unique gateway for students to engage with movement through both verbatim imitation and personal improvisation. However, for the dance educator, these trends represent more than just catchy choreography; they serve as a vital pedagogical crossroads. This session explores how we can leverage the magnetism of social media to spark creativity while simultaneously grounding our students in the essential principles of intellectual property and artistic integrity. We will examine the shift from passive consumption to active creation, discussing how educators can use the "small screen" as a tool to enhance performance quality and digital literacy. By embracing the mobile lens, we can help dancers find their unique voice within a remix culture that often prioritizes the crowd over the individual. Furthermore, we will delve into the sociological impact of these digital spaces, exploring how dance challenges foster a global sense of community and unity among the next generation. Join us as we bridge the gap between the studio and the feed, transforming viral trends into meaningful, ethical, and expressive educational milestones.

Beyond the Studio: Building Community Dance Programs

Ashlee McKinnon

For many dance educators, the studio is the first training ground—not only for teaching artistry but also for leadership, mentorship, and creative facilitation. Increasingly, these skills are being transferred into nonprofit and community arts education spaces, where the scope of impact extends beyond individual classes to entire neighborhoods and communities. This panel examines the transition from studio-based teaching to community programming through the lens of community engagement, equity, and sustainability. This co-presented workshop will draw from both presenters' lived experiences on making the shift—sharing the challenges of reorienting

from a student-focused model to community-wide impact, and the opportunities to shape initiatives rooted in access, collaboration, and cultural responsiveness. Topics covered include how their current roles have been informed by their dance background, the new skill sets required (from fundraising to curriculum development to advocacy), and the ways nonprofit programming can create broader access to the arts. The session will provide practical insights for studio and classroom educators, dancers, and program managers to deepen their understanding of program development, and guide students' curiosity about nontraditional pathways in dance education. Attendees will gain a practical understanding of how dance education can move from transactional instruction to transformational community practice. This session will provide opportunities for group discussion, brainstorming, and individual reflection. Participants will also leave with resources in curriculum and program design, toolkits for community arts-based engagement, impact and reporting tools, and networking opportunities. The theme for NDEO's conference is SYNERGY: Uniting to Progress the Field of Dance Education. This workshop not only brings together various stakeholders in the dance education community, but it also demonstrates how dance education has and can continue to progress in its impact and value through community programming. What better way to honor this than to use dance as a tool for advocacy and social connection than through community-centered dance education."

Beyond the Studio: Building Dance Community
Marina Thompson
Building a strong dance community goes beyond choreography—it's about fostering relationships, creating synergy, and connecting all stakeholders in a student's educational journey. This session explores best practices for cultivating a vibrant dance program where students grow interpersonally, develop belonging, and use dance to become engaged, contributing members of their community. Using Southern Middle School's Dance program as a case study, participants will learn strategies to engage students, principals, parents, teachers, student services, and other schools, leaving with practical tips, ready-to-use activities, and actionable strategies to build a connected, inclusive, and impactful dance community.

Beyond Traditional Secondary Dance Models
Vonntanice Turner
Reimagining success in grades 6–12 dance education requires expanding beyond conservatory training pipelines toward developing embodied leaders and lifelong movers. This paper presentation explores three interconnected frameworks drawn from liberal arts university dance training and implemented within a public secondary gifted dance program. Pillar 1: Functional Alignment.
Functional alignment reframes technique as efficient body organization. This framework supports adolescent physical development, injury prevention, movement literacy, and expressive clarity during periods of rapid physical and developmental change.
Pillar 2: Lifelong Artistic Practice and Leadership Development. This framework positions dance education as a vehicle for whole-child development. Through choreographic inquiry, collaborative critique structures, and reflective learning practices, students cultivate agency, creative problem-solving, collaboration, emotional intelligence, and intentional artistic decision-making. Pillar 3:
University-to-Secondary Translation.

This framework adapts somatic inquiry, improvisation, and reflective dance philosophy into developmentally accessible instructional models. These approaches foster embodied literacy, where technical training supports personal and cultural expression rather than replacing it. By translating liberal arts dance pedagogy into secondary education settings, this session offers shared instructional language that supports alignment and collaboration across 6 –12, higher education, studio, and community dance sectors, reinforcing dance education as a connected ecosystem. Participants will explore framework-based approaches to assessment and documentation that support standards alignment, student growth, and sustained engagement in secondary dance programs. The session will include presentation, guided discussion, and a concise framework summary designed for adaptation across diverse dance education environments.

Board of Directors Meet & Connect

Ray Schwartz, Julie Pentz

Synergy is the idea that we are stronger together than we are alone. Join our Board of Directors for an open and welcoming conversation about our shared work, our vision, and the role each of us plays in shaping what comes next. This is an opportunity to build relationships, exchange ideas, and strengthen the alignment that powers our mission.

Boundaries as Fences, Gates, and Anchors for Dance

Amy West

Burnout-Proof Your Teaching: Boundaries as Fences, Gates, and Anchors for Dance Educators Dance educators face high rates of physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion, and burnout, often in environments where overextension is normalized as a deep commitment to students. This interactive workshop reframes burnout prevention as a matter of intentional boundary design rather than personal resilience, offering educators a practical toolkit for sustaining long-term teaching careers. Using the metaphor of fences, gates, and anchors, participants will examine how professional boundaries function as structures that protect energy, clarify roles, and support healthy learning environments. Fences define the limits of responsibility and scope of work, gates represent intentional and time-bound access points educators choose to open, and anchors represent the core values that guide boundary decisions. Together, these elements provide a clear, adaptable framework for boundary-setting across studio, K–12, and higher education contexts. Through guided reflection, activities, and small-group discussion, participants will identify common boundary breakdowns that contribute to burnout, including over-demonstration, excessive availability, invisible labor, and emotional overextension. The workshop emphasizes how well-defined boundaries not only support educator wellness but also model professionalism and healthy boundaries with students. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of how boundaries impact their lives, practical language for holding limits without guilt, and a values-based decision-making framework they can add to their toolkit of teaching practices.

Building a Place-Based Dance Ecosystem

Deanna Encinias, Joaquín Encinias, Annie D'Orazio

This panel examines how a place-based flamenco institution in New Mexico evolved from a legacy cultural practice into an integrated dance education ecosystem linking

community access, conservatory training, professional production, K–12 partnership, and higher education collaboration. The National Institute of Flamenco (NIF), now operating with a $3.5 million annual operating budget and 35 W-2 employees, has grown through structural alignment rather than program expansion alone. Rooted in generational flamenco transmission that has shaped New Mexico's cultural landscape for decades, the organization developed interdependent infrastructure that sustains participation across multiple levels. Community-based classes and public partnerships provide entry points; the Conservatory of Flamenco Arts supports both open-access training and advanced study; a public charter school partnership reinforces arts-integrated middle and high school education; the professional repertory company bridges training and sustained artistic employment; and the annual festival—now in its fourth decade—functions as cyclical infrastructure, intensifying learning, mentorship, and global-local exchange each year. The festival reorganizes the ecosystem annually, reinforcing continuity across generations and strengthening ties between local practitioners and international artists. The ecosystem extends through a long-standing partnership with the University of New Mexico, where festival collaboration, professional company residency, and academic pathways reinforce continuity between community practice and higher education. As the organization has scaled, growth has required stabilizing artist labor, formalizing workforce systems, and aligning educational continuity with economic sustainability. The panel argues that long-term sustainability for non-dominant dance forms depends on institutional interdependence: workforce stabilization, cyclical programming, cross-sector alignment, and place-based continuity. Participants will leave with a transferable ecosystem-design framework for identifying structural anchors, progression pathways, and catalytic programming within their own communities.

Building Capacity for Discomfort in Dance
Gerald Casel
In dance, we gravitate toward the familiar—the steps we know, the phrases that fit, the improvisations that feel like home. Safety keeps us uninjured, yes, but it can also keep us small. These comfort zones—whether in technique class, choreographic generation, improvisational structures, or performance—serve to protect us but they can also constrain artistic and developmental potential. This is both a mental and physical issue. As Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen writes, "If you want to know which way the wind is blowing, take a look at the sand."
A useful check-in: Are you setting a boundary to honor your values and energy, or to avoid feeling exposed? Are you stepping back because something is truly misaligned, or simply because it's new and uncomfortable? Boundaries matter. They protect our wellbeing and clarify our needs. But under stress, it's easy to mistake self-protection for self-limitation. Growth and discomfort are often intertwined. The challenge is learning to discern when discomfort signals danger and when it signals possibility. In this workshop, we'll examine the patterns—physical, mental, and creative—that shape how we move and make choices. We'll question our defaults in improvisation, choreography, and teaching. Do our habits still serve us? Are we present, or running on autopilot? We'll ask whether the stories we teach are still the ones we believe. By exploring these questions through movement and reflection, we'll learn to recognize productive discomfort—the kind that expands

our artistry and pedagogy. And we'll practice leaning toward it, rather than away from it.

Building Community: Teaching Somatics to Teens

Susan Bauer

Teaching somatics to teens can equip young dancers with essential self-care skills, while encouraging a more compassionate learning environment. Yet how do we guide our students, while empowering them with a sense of agency in relation to their own bodies? How do we teach in a way that builds a more collaborative community? This requires an engaging, student-centered approach that encourages both individual expression and respect for diversity. In this workshop, participants experience a sample somatic movement activity based in embodied anatomy, followed by a brief presentation/discussion of the presenter's "Eight Pedagogy Principles" from her book, The Embodied Teen. Participants first gain experience with the somatic practices, since enhancing one's own embodied experience is central to the ability to teach the material, while the pedagogy principles offer a framework which can be adapted based on one's particular background and student population. When approached with care, we can create an environment to skillfully invite young dancers into somatic practices--helping them to thrive, now and into adulthood. Come move, explore, and discuss how to lead youth in somatic practices. (Note: While geared toward teens, this material is also applicable / adaptable for young, college-age adults as well).

Building Identity, Belonging, and Agency in Dance

Marissa Nesbit, Scott Edgar

As dance educators, we recognize that we teach more than creating, performing, responding, and connecting to dance; embedded with our work are transformative experiences where students can develop skills that go beyond the studio and develop their whole selves. However, in order to fully realize the potential of dance education to support social emotional learning (SEL), we must be purposeful in our curricular and pedagogical choices, aligning our work with research-based frameworks while using our individual creativity to design and adapt innovative studio practices that meet the needs of our students and school contexts. The framework of Artistic SEL articulates how learning in the arts supports SEL through the three pillars of Identity–including self-awareness, autonomy, and individual expression, Belonging–through connectedness, empathetic engagement, and collaboration, and Agency—honing one's voice, capability, and decision making. Artistic SEL intentionally embeds life skill development into artistic processes and practices in service of student empowerment to enrich creative expression, technical fluency, contextual understanding, and human development. While there is not one prescriptive way or technique to embed SEL into dance education, an ethical, comprehensive, and culturally engaged approach to SEL calls upon educators to think deeply and creatively about how they understand SEL and engage with it across their curriculums. Artistic SEL touches all aspects of dance education when it is embedded, intentional, sustained, visible and transferable, and accessible–key principles of artistic SEL curriculum design. Further, research on artistic SEL identifies a range of thirteen core practices that educators across arts teaching contexts embed into their work that positively impacts SEL, including self-reflection, accountability, engagement through artistic works, and opportunities for leadership. This session will guide educators to better

understand their practice and how their classroom can be a space for rich social and emotional growth through dance. Participants will engage in movement activities, discussion, and reflection centered around the pillars of artistic SEL: Identity, Belonging, and Agency, and will connect these experiences to the core practices as illustrated through narratives describing dance curriculum in varied settings. Throughout, we share the theoretical framework that guides this work and offer space for reflection, ideation, and goal setting. Participants will gain a better understanding of their learning culture, develop routines and mindsets to organically build SEL competencies for their students, and build strategies that support student empowerment and well-being.

Built In, Not Added On: Making Practical Inclusion

Molly Quinn

Dance educators often want to create inclusive classes, but can feel overwhelmed by the idea that accessibility requires expensive equipment, specialized training, or a completely redesigned curriculum. This session reframes that belief, and shows that accessibility can be instilled in the classroom with thoughtfulness, care, patience, and a little bit of creativity. "Built In, Not Added On" explores how dancers with varied access needs can be meaningfully and joyfully included in dance classes using tools most studios already own, or can acquire for minimal cost. Rather than treating students with disabilities as obstacles, this session demonstrates how they can become an intentional, expressive part of class structure and choreography. Participants will learn practical, immediately applicable strategies for adapting common studio tools such as parachutes, scarves, bean bags, and props so they are accessible to dancers using mobility devices, those that have neurological conditions, muscular issues, exa. We will explore ways to modify classroom tools without isolating or "othering" students, ensuring that adaptations feel seamless and integrated rather than separate or simplified. This session also focuses on shifting mindset. From asking "How do I accommodate this dancer?" to "How do I design class so access is already built in?" Attendees will gain concrete examples of how to structure warm-ups, center work, traveling phrases, and group activities that naturally include mobility devices as part of the movement vocabulary. Designed for educators across ages, styles, and experience levels, this session emphasizes creativity, flexibility, and confidence, empowering teachers to leave with tools they can implement immediately. No specialized equipment required. No prior adaptive dance experience needed. Just thoughtful teaching, curiosity, and a commitment to making dance truly accessible for all bodies.

C

Career Forward: Stories and Strategies

Karen Clemente, Toni Duncan, Miriam Giguere, Monica Frichtel

The session is a panel presentation focusing on career building strategies for dance students of all ages from various sectors. Panelists will present examples of how they have worked with dance students to identify skills gained through dance that prepare them for their chosen careers, as well as practical tools for pursuing dance and dance-related careers. The panelists represent a variety of sectors, some of which overlap among the presenters: K-12 education; dance studio, college/university, and

a state dance organization. Across these sectors the panelists have presented career workshops, webinars, in-person panel presentations, classroom/studio sessions; developed career internships; and have traveled with students to dance career sites.

Career Pathways in Dance
Bradford Chin, Alana Shaw, Morgan Stinnett
This moderated panel of dance education professionals will share about their various corners of the dance education field and their pathways into those experiences. This session is designed for undergraduate and graduate students who are preparing for postgraduate careers in dance education outside of higher education teaching positions/professorships, which are addressed in the "Navigating the Academic Job Market" conference session.

Caregiver Affinity Group
Ali Duffy, Madeline Jazz Harvey, Meghan Frederick
This Affinity Group is for anyone balancing the demands of caregiving and work in dance education. This includes but is not limited to; mothers, fathers, non-binary parents, guardians, adoptive parents, foster parents, those with children, those caring for elders or people with disabilities, and those caring for community members. Likewise, this includes but is not limited to those working in postsecondary education, those working in K-12, those working in pre-K environments, those working in community organizations or private studios, as well as those volunteering in a dance education capacity. It is the perspective of the leaders of this Affinity Group that Caregiver Educators have unique skills, and face unique challenges in dance education. The demands of caregiving labor, and the people who perform this labor, have been historically invisibilized and undervalued due to systemic sexism, racism, ableism, and ageism. Those in caregiving positions are often juggling incredible workloads that are unacknowledged and uncompensated in addition to, and frequently in conflict with, the work that they do elsewhere. This results in poor quality of life and high levels of stress for Caregiver Educators without proper support. This group will serve as the following: a place to share skills learned through caregiving and applicable to dance education (and vice versa), a place to voice challenges faced either in the workplace or in caregiving practice, a place to share solutions to those challenges, and/or to imagine new best practices that would better support Caregiver Educators as they work toward thriving, not surviving.

Celebrating Jody's Timeless Lesson Plans: DEL Workshop
Jody Gottfried Arnhold, Ann Biddle
Join us as we continue to celebrate 30 years of the nationally acclaimed 92NY Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) professional learning program with a dynamic, movement-based workshop led by 92NY DEL Founder Jody Gottfried Arnhold and 92NY DEL Founding Faculty, Ann Biddle. We will share excerpts from DEL's newest book: Jody's Timeless Lesson Plans, written by Jody Gottfried Arnhold with Ann Biddle. The book celebrates Jody's visionary leadership in the field of dance education and reconstructs over 50 of Arnhold's classic lesson plans developed over her 20+ years of teaching dance in New York City public schools. Experience one of Jody's Timeless Lesson Plans through exploration, guided discovery, and collaborative dance-making using the DEL Dance Framework. Whether you're new to DEL or a longtime member of our community, this inclusive,

hands-on intensive will inspire, energize, and reconnect you to the joy of dance education.

ChoreoGPT: ChatGPT as a Partner in Dance Making

Maggi Dueker

This class examines the role of generative AI, particularly ChatGPT, as a creative partner in dance-making. Through embodied exercises, participants generate prompts, translate AI-generated text into movement, and analyze how this tool can stimulate creativity, foster collaboration, refine artistic concepts, and broaden choreographic possibilities. Beyond studio exploration, the session incorporates guided discussions on the ethical application of AI in educational contexts. Participants critically examine authorship, bias, and student agency, and formulate strategies for employing AI that prioritizes human creativity and supports inclusive teaching practices. This class is designed for individuals seeking inspiration or aiming to thoughtfully integrate emerging technologies into their creative or pedagogical practices. Participants should bring a notebook and a smartphone with ChatGPT installed.

Choreographing Access: Tools for Dancemaking

Rachel Repinz

This session offers strategies for teaching dance students to use access tools and systems (such as audio description, captioning, sensory kits, tactile installations, and unconventional seating) as part of their choreographic explorations. By weaving access into the dancemaking process from the start, rather than adding it during later pre-production phases, students and educators can deepen their understanding of access in dance performance and recognize its potential as a generative artistic practice. Participants will be led through a series of experiential activities that explore access tools/systems as creative materials and pedagogical methods, while maintaining the integrity of these tools for access. Together, we will investigate how to weave audio description, captioning, tactile elements, and other access-based approaches into choreographic and teaching practices in meaningful and imaginative ways.

Circle of Synergy: Tibetan Guozhuang Dance

Kathy Luo

This session explores Tibetan Guozhuang Dance as a communal circle dance rooted in cultural celebration and social connection. Through embodied participation and contextual discussion, attendees will experience how Guozhuang Dance functions as a synergistic pedagogical model—uniting community-building, cultural diversity, and technique-based learning. The session highlights how integrating world dance forms into higher education curricula can foster collaboration, deepen cultural awareness, and contribute to the continued progress of dance education.

Collaborative Teaching at the Ballet Academy

Megan Flynn, Sierra Wilkerson

In this movement workshop, Megan Flynn and Sierra Wilkerson will co-lead participants through a ballet class to demonstrate how they engage in coordinated teaching practices at a pre-professional ballet academy. The focus of this session will be on their current teaching of children ages 9-12 at the Academy. The presenters will model how they engage in lateral mentorship, and collaboration to blend their diverse approaches in the instruction of classical ballet exercises. Flynn's approach is informed by her two decades of research into anti-authoritarian, inclusive ballet pedagogy, and experience teaching in both higher education and the private sector. As full-time Resident Faculty at the Academy, she

incorporates creative dance, and improvisation with her own training in the Royal Academy of Dance examination system. Wilkerson, a 2nd year trainee with the ballet company, brings a Balanchine perspective to her teaching at the Academy. She draws from influential ballet mentors from her previous full-time training experiences, in addition to her current professional training at the Academy. Both presenters share a passion for teaching from a trauma-informed lens, and a strong desire to shift the culture of ballet training to be more inclusive. Multiple days per week, the pair engage in dialogue about ballet pedagogy, approaches to classroom management, student progress, assessment, and choreography. Although they come from vastly different life experiences (geographic locations, age, type of ballet training, educational background) they come together to find common ground and a shared philosophy that is proving greatly beneficial to Academy students. Throughout this 60 minute ballet class session, the facilitators will offer participants several examples of exercises that are a result of their numerous conversations on coordinated teaching best practices. They will transparently discuss the why behind their choices, aiming to empower dance educators working across sectors. Participants will also leave with several new ways of thinking about mentorship models that benefit new and experienced dance educators. The session will conclude with 10 minutes for workshop participants to engage with each other to problem-solve challenges from their unique teaching perspectives.

Commercial Dance Through A Somatic Lens
Susannah LeMarquand
Commercial dancers train just as thoroughly and intensely as ballet or contemporary dancers. They take daily classes, participate in long rehearsal days, and perform with a force that requires commitment, discipline, and hard work. Yet, in the professional world of dance, they are sometimes seen as "lesser" than those that study to become a concert or company dancer and easily categorized as those that simply learn through a methodology of "5,6.7.8". The question then becomes, how can we help to break them of that perceived label? Through my applied pedagogy of somatic methodologies in higher education musical theatre dance classes, and my work as a commercial choreographer at local theme parks, I have developed a way of training these dancers to help them better understand how their bodies can better understand and engage in the movement they are learning and performing in this field. The end result is better retention, body awareness, knowledge of how and why the movement connects, and self-confidence in their own performance. Through this session, participants will experience a sample class that will guide them through how to integrate somatic methods into the popular forms of commercial dance in order to help their students know more than just steps.

Competition Culture: Risks & Rewards
Neo Lynch, Karen Schupp, Natalie Tacuri
This panel examines the opportunities and consequences of competition culture in dance education. While competitions offer access and visibility, they also reinforce aesthetic hierarchies, Eurocentric standards, and normative ideas of excellence. Through perspectives on adjudication, studio pedagogy, and research, panelists explore racialized genre practices, emotional adultification, gendered authority, and prize-winning choreography. Attendees will gain critical frameworks and practical tools for engaging competition culture

more ethically, developmentally, and culturally consciously across studios, classrooms, and higher education contexts.

Connecting The Dots, Each Step At A Time "Calypso"

Stephen Hankey

The session is geared to target educators who teach in a culturally diverse classroom setting. The Trinidad & Tobago Carnival Dance "Calypso/Soca" would be taught at an introductory level using a holistic approach of integrating movement from other genres. The use of Calypso/Soca music and traditional drumming together with storytelling would be incorporated in this session. Participants would experience and explore movements from a hybrid of Trinidad & Tobago's Folkloric Dance Styles. When learning this style the participants would explore body-isolations and hand gestures. This session encourages and promotes cultural awareness and diversity through Trinidad and Tobago traditional dance forms.

Creating Synergy Between Literacy & Movement K-12

Tabbatha Prewitt

This session presents a practical, K–12–focused approach to teaching dance through the written word, creating synergy between literacy and movement to support student engagement, creativity, and access. Designed for dance educators working in elementary, middle, and high school settings, this presentation shares strategies that can be implemented immediately within diverse school environments. In many K–12 dance classrooms, instruction relies heavily on physical demonstration and imitation. While effective, this approach can create barriers for students who need time to think, process language, or connect meaning before moving. Teaching dance from the written word positions text—such as poetry, short narratives, spoken word, historical excerpts, and student-generated writing—as the starting point for movement exploration and choreography. Students analyze written language for imagery, mood, rhythm, and structure, then translate those elements into movement choices and compositional forms. This pedagogy benefits K–12 dance education by strengthening interdisciplinary alignment with English Language Arts standards while maintaining core dance outcomes such as technique, choreography, and performance intention. It supports arts advocacy within schools and encourages collaboration between dance educators and classroom teachers. The session outlines a clear instructional process adaptable across grade levels and dance styles: 1.) Selecting age-appropriate, culturally relevant texts, 2.) Guiding students through close reading, discussion, and annotation, 3.) Generating movement from textual elements such as verbs, metaphors, and pacing, 4.) Structuring choreography using narrative arc or written form, and 5.) Reflecting and revising through writing, discussion, and peer feedback. Participants will engage in a movement activity modeled for a K–12 classroom and will receive lesson structures, prompts, and assessment strategies aligned to student learning goals. This approach encourages new thinking by integrating literacy as an active tool for movement creation rather than a separate academic task. It promotes equity and access by offering multiple entry points for multilingual learners, neurodivergent students, and students with varied physical abilities. Centering diverse texts and student voices also elevates underrepresented narratives and dance forms, supporting culturally responsive and inclusive teaching practices. By uniting literacy and movement in K–12 dance classrooms, this

session demonstrates synergy in action, showing how integrated teaching practices can expand access, deepen learning, and move dance education forward.

Crip/Mad Archive Dances: dancing textual traces

Petra Kuppers

In the Crip/Mad Archive Dances Project (2021 – ongoing) I use multi-sensorial and embodied historical research methods that hinge on the archive as an opening and obscuring mechanism, as a place of excavation, as a place of hiding. As a performance studies scholar, I am experimenting at the site of the unarchived, using dance's disciplinary forms to move my way through different relations to freedom and carcerality and different understandings of 'the mad' in the dance canon. In this session, we will explore how we can use these research methods in embodied as well as textual practice together. This session will involve movement, text and improvisation: you will work with texts I provide and together we will explore methods of creating choreographic traces out of historical asylum spaces. This session aims to offer you support for combining dancerly and text-based methods in your own classrooms and choreographic practices.

D

Dance & Disability Community Meet-up

Rachel Repinz

This community meeting is open to Disabled and non-Disabled attendees who are interested in discussing topics related to dance and disability. This community meeting will serve as a space to share resources, network, and talk about current topics in the field.

Dance 2050 : A Collaborative Working Session

Kelly Lester, Jessie Levey

This intensive session will engage participants in the application and amplification of the Dance 2050 Vision Statement. Participants will revisit the original vision, published in 2014, through collaborative analysis, movement exploration, and creative ideation to explore how its themes can be meaningfully applied within current teaching and learning environments. Through facilitated dialogue and structured activities, participants will examine the vision's key ideas in light of current shifts in dance education, including evolving student populations, interdisciplinary collaboration, technological change, and expanding career pathways for dancers and dance educators. The session will invite participants to reflect on how the aspirations outlined in Dance 2050 continue to resonate, where new questions have emerged, and how educators can collectively advance the vision within their own institutional contexts. Designed as an interactive think tank, the session invites participants to contribute to the collective stewardship and ongoing evolution of the Dance 2050 vision.

Dance 2050: The Future, Together

Jessie Levey, Kelly Lester

Dance 2050: The Future Together aims to be a facilitated, collaborative exploration of the future of dance education. Grounded in the Dance 2050 Vision originally articulated through NDEO-led think tanks, this session treats the vision not as a static document, but as a living framework that must be continually examined, affirmed, and recalibrated in response to shifting cultural, educational, technological, and social conditions. Aligned with the 2026 conference theme of synergy, the session will center collective inquiry as a method.

Participants will engage in small-group "think tank" discussions focused on the eight core themes of the Dance 2050 Vision: innovation in teaching, leadership, interdisciplinary work, diversity and global perspectives, community engagement, social justice and citizenship, technology, and preparing students for the future. Each group will be guided by structured prompts that ask: What remains essential and enduring? What language, assumptions, or priorities feel incomplete or outdated? What emerging realities must be more explicitly addressed as we look toward 2050? As we are also not static, we will embody our ideas through movement in our think tank groups to deepen our collaborative work. This session is designed for dance educators, scholars, artists, administrators, and students who are invested in shaping the next chapter of dance education as a collective and as stewards of the Dance 2050 vision. Participants do not need prior engagement with Dance 2050 to engage in the discussion and exploration of the workshop.

Dance Education as a Public Health Initiative
Ana Lopes Arechiga
What does it mean to feel a sense of belonging in a dance class? How can intentional planning and facilitation support students' (and teachers') senses of belonging in class? During this session, we will discuss the results of year-long collaboration amongst Keshet Dance Company and Center for the Arts, The New Mexico Department of Health, and dancer/choreographer/facilitator Maggie Bergeron. Using Keshet as a case study we will share some of the work we have done over the last year as we delved into viewing dance education through the public health lens, centering around the creation of spaces of belonging to support violence prevention and using dance as a protective factor. We will share effective practices for creating spaces of belonging through intentional design, facilitation, and evaluation. Keshet and Maggie have collaborated over the last 26 years in various capacities. Over the last year our partnership has honed in on supporting Keshet's teaching faculty to center and value the creation of spaces of belonging in their classroom, allowing for Keshet's mission and vision to come alive for students. While Keshet's mission and values naturally point to belonging, this particular effort was supported through a NM Department of Health contract as we explored how spaces of belonging were directly correlated to public health initiatives by reducing crime in our community. In this workshop we will: explore the timeline of this collaboration, share how this work has continued to develop for us over the past year, center effective practices for participants to adapt and integrate into their own pedagogies, and lead participants through some of the movement practices shared and developed with the Keshet Teaching Artists.

Dance for Joy
Allegra Lillard
This joyful, experiential session is inspired by Dance for Joy: A Creative Movement Curriculum for Ages 3–5 Years by Allegra Lillard. Through movement, rhymes, and music, participants will explore playful, practical strategies that support the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of young children. Educators will actively engage in shared movement experiences and leave with accessible tools that can be immediately used in both studio and classroom settings.

Dance Pedagogy for Teenage Girls with ADHD
Margaret DeLucia

Teenage girls with ADHD are frequently overlooked in dance studio environments, where expectations of choreographic memory retention and emotional control often conflict with neurodivergent learning needs. Utilizing autoenthnography and thematic analysis, my research addresses the following two questions: 1.What challenges do teenage girls with ADHD typically face in dance studio environments? 2. How can educators adapt to create a more inclusive environment for these students? Through the theoretical lens of The Social Model of Disability, this session will identify three core challenges faced by dancers with ADHD: impaired interoception, working memory deficits, and emotional dysregulation; and will propose how dance educators and studio owners can adapt to support these dancers. Participants will explore practical teaching strategies including visual and video-based teaching tools and feedback practices that support emotional regulation and student confidence. Emphasis is placed on systemic studio changes and teacher education rather than expecting students to "try harder." This session encourages dance educators to rethink assumptions about discipline, talent, and attention while offering concrete pedagogical tools that create more inclusive and effective learning environments. Supporting neurodivergent dancers not only improves access and equity but ultimately strengthens artistic development for all students.

Dance Studio Sector Meet-Up!

Callie Rekas

The Dance Studio Sector (previously known as the Independent or Private Sector) is a vibrant and busy sector of dance education with diverse needs. Come get connected with other studio teachers and owners from around the country, share resources, and let us know how NDEO can best serve your needs in the future. You can learn more about the Dance Studio Mentorship Program at this session, but it is open to ALL in the studio sector, not just mentorship program participants.

Dance Teachers on SEL Impact in School Programs

Edwin Brathwaite

The mental well-being of young people has declined significantly over the past two decades, with rising rates of anxiety and depression intensified by the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, increased social media exposure, and academic stress. As schools continue to prioritize academic outcomes, educators are increasingly called upon to support the social-emotional and mental health needs of students—often without adequate tools or training. This session explores how dance education can serve as a powerful, embodied approach to supporting social-emotional learning (SEL) and student well-being in middle and high school settings. Drawing on qualitative interviews with four middle school teachers and one high school teacher, participants will examine educator perceptions and instructional practices that intentionally cultivate SEL competencies, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills. Through discussion and reflection, this session will highlight how dance classrooms can become spaces of connection, expression, and emotional regulation that support the development of the whole child. Attendees will leave with research-informed insights and practical strategies for integrating SEL-centered practices into dance instruction to foster inclusive, responsive, and supportive learning environments.

Dancemaking in Nepantla: Communal Auto-Ethnography

Isabella Melsheimer

When you enter an unfamiliar environment, how do you go about learning what's going on, why it's happening, or how to behave? When you enter a familiar environment, what assumptions do you take for granted, and what might you question or reevaluate? These are questions at the heart of anthropology, a social science discipline which takes humanity as its object of study. This session introduces the Galaxy Inquiry Method, a fluid embodied inquiry process that integrates research, somatic awareness, and ethnographic performance. As a dance educator with a background in cultural anthropology, I developed this approach to integrate methods of ethnographic inquiry from the field of anthropology into the choreographic process in a way that was useful and accessible to movers with a range of familiarity with the fields of both dance and anthropology. This process draws from queer Chicana feminist scholar Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of nepantla as a space of questioning and exploration that embraces collectivity, multiplicity, and nonbinary conceptualizations of what is or what can be. It is simultaneously rooted within a commitment to critical engagement with the world and the pursuit of social justice. Through methods including participant-observation, journaling, peer interviews, and dialogic choreographic exploration, participants experience dialogue across difference, build confidence with creative embodied expression, and cultivate shared community through common purpose. They are invited to make and deepen cross-cultural connections while expressing distinct personal histories. This session introduces this interdisciplinary framework for embodied inquiry and auto-ethnographic dancemaking embedded in ideas of curiosity, productive discomfort, and self-discovery. Its purpose is to give dancers tools to create collaborative performances expressing themes, stories, problems, and solutions experienced in their communities. The session reflects on the establishment and impact of facilitating this process in a community dance class over the past year, introducing pedagogical strategies, practical applications, and possibilities for future adaptation in new settings. Session attendees will have the opportunity to experience the pedagogical strategies described through embodied activities including movement-based listening and storytelling exercises to create mini auto-ethnographic performances. Attendees will experience new strategies for integrating ethnographic performance in their teaching and dancemaking practices adaptable to a diversity of learning settings.

Dancing and Vocalizing for ALL Bodies

Karenne Koo, Sabrina Geoffrion

Using foundational principles from somatic dance pioneer Barbara Mettler (1907-2002), this workshop presents how we facilitate an inclusive experience where dancers simultaneously create their own music and movements rather than relying on outside sources for sound. Our non-profit dance organization, Dancesequences Inc. works among diverse populations; including elders in memory care/assisted living, adults and children with disabilities, and community members of all ages with and without dance experience. First, we will show video of Dancesequences' Repertory Company comprised of dancers of diverse ages with and without disabilities exploring Mettler-based dance studies. The movement session will begin with individually awakening the kinesthetic sense and activating muscles through exploring the feeling of basic

body movements. We will also actively engage our vocal cords, a part of the body that is oftentimes overlooked in dance. Studies in mouth, breath and vocal sounds will give dancers a sound vocabulary that can be accessed during the dance. This process of "tuning up" our body and voice helps us understand that each body is a unique instrument of expression. We will freely use our voices to create a unity of sound and movement, leading to awareness of the expressions we are forming, giving us choices to control our movement forms, which ultimately leads to more creative freedom. Mettler-based progressions from individual to groups of different sizes will give participants the opportunity to fully express themselves individually and to also relate to the world around them, which includes the other dancers. Improvising in group dances allows dancers to connect with each other by creating movement forms that cannot be accomplished alone. The added ability to access vocal sounds as a connecting force among dancers and within group forms are freeing and joyous experiences that build community organically. It is an empowering moment when we allow our voices to be heard…and to be part of a community of voices. Discussion and resources from Mettler Studios and Dancesequences Inc. for teaching these studies to diverse populations will be shared.

Dancing Futures: Connecting Through Mojah Dance

Kikora Franklin, Terrie Ajile Axam

Dancing Our Futures: Join the Mojah Movement! is an interactive, embodied workshop that explores Mojah (Modern-Jazz-West African fusion) dance and demonstrates how this culturally rich form can be used to strengthen individual identity and collective belonging. Rooted in West African and modern-based dance practice, this session models a participatory framework used with both new and seasoned dancers that has successfully fostered connection, affirmation, and collaborative creativity. The session will begin with a Mojah movement warm-up that centers breathing, rhythm, groundedness, and communal energy. Participants will progress learning additional Mojah-specific movements, move across the floor, and learn a short movement combination that they will be invited to perform in small groups. Class will conclude with a community circle, inviting individuals to dance freely, employing improvisation and freestyle. This session offers a framework for educators and community practitioners seeking new movement vocabularies that can cultivate connection and belonging in their own spaces. Participants will learn vocabulary from the Mojah dance form and will be invited to incorporate this dance movement vocabulary into their teaching and pedagogical practices. In a time when many communities face fragmentation and uncertainty, dance is a powerful tool we can use to anchor ourselves in a shared purpose. The aim is to offer an embodied practice that reinforces our collective work as dancers, educators, and leaders.

Dancing the Data: Evidence for K-12 Dance Advocacy

Helen Buck-Pavlick

Participation in the arts has been demonstrated to improve student social-emotional outcomes and move the needle on student academic outcomes; however, this evidence rarely includes the specific benefits of K-12 dance education. This session will examine evidence from an urban district's K-12 dance program about how universal access to comprehensive, sequential, standards-aligned dance education

impacts student academic outcomes. Statistical analysis will be situated within the narrative context of a case study district, providing participants with evidence and advocacy tools they can apply within their educational settings. The session will share insights and policy recommendations for teachers, policymakers, and persons interested in expanding dance education within K-12 schools.

Dancing Through Cancer

Meghan McLyman, Ruth Arena, Misti Galvan

This paper presentation will present a select reading from the book Dancing Through Cancer: Personal Stories of Learning and Discovery as Dance and Movement Educators (Routledge, 2026) written from the perspectives of dancers and their personal journeys with cancer. This book does not attempt to offer best practices, but rather the practices that have been experienced by real dancers living through cancer and their resulting outcomes. This common history brings up similar challenges, such as facing decisions about how much to share, what to present to the world, how hard to push through daily activities, how much to rest, how to maintain a career or hold onto a job, and how to communicate with medical professionals and your colleagues. A new relational experience of self identity emerges as the dance educator moves from a person without cancer to one living with/through cancer. Throughout the process of writing this book the authors discovered how dance education and somatic knowledge has informed and guided their recovery. Dancers are disciplined to be in control of their bodies, continue through pain, and take on a multitude of roles, which can include performer, choreographer, educator, administrator, writer, partner, caretaker, etc. A cancer diagnosis is a traumatic experience for any individual, it removes a great degree of autonomy from the dancer and often forces one to limit or cease their livelihood. Regardless of the disease stage, treatment options, and life expectancy, a cancer diagnosis alters one's daily life in brief to extreme ways. Dancing Through Cancer is a multi-author book that shares personal stories of cancer diagnosis and treatment as well as narratives that encompass topics specific to the dancer and cancer. This book is divided into five sections, referred to as Stages, plus an introduction and conclusion. The introduction details the backstory of the book, including the formation of the "Dance Educators Living With Cancer" (DELC) research group originally initiated by Dr. Doug Risner of Wayne State University. Each subsequent chapter weaves the personal stories of the authors (Ruth Arena, Amanda Clark, Misit Galvan, Wendy Masterson, and Meghan McLyman). Stage 0: Diagnosis, Stage I: Choices, Stage II: Identity, Stage III: Communication and Boundaries, Stage IV: Loss, Stage V: Transformation.

Dancing Together: Cross-District Inclusion

Stephanie Bergen

This experiential workshop shares a cross-district inclusive dance partnership that grew from a simple idea: students with disabilities deserve opportunities to dance with others, not apart from them. The collaboration brings together my self-contained 3rd/4th grade special education class at a District 31 public school and students from a District 75 offsite program through shared movement, yoga, and mindfulness experiences. The partnership began after meeting at a borough-wide dance education meeting, where educators were encouraged to collaborate across programs. Alla Feldman, a District 75 music and movement teacher, suggested the idea, and her creativity and enthusiasm launched the project. Together,

we co-designed a unit grounded in regulation, communication, and connection. Weekly co-planning, virtual classes via Google Meet, and in-person visits allowed students to meet, move together, and build familiarity over time, despite being in different districts and learning environments. Participants will experience movement tasks from the unit and see how lessons were designed to be flexible, accessible, and joyful. I will share strategies for teaching across Pre-K–8, including general education, inclusion, and self-contained classes, while maintaining consistency for students still developing confidence in dance. Alla will offer her perspective as a first-time NDEO attendee, highlighting how this collaboration inspired her teaching and expanded possibilities for her students. We will also discuss logistics that supported the partnership, including administrative support, consent, scheduling, and the importance of sustained co-planning. This session is for educators seeking practical ways to create inclusive experiences across programs and districts. Attendees will leave with adaptable lesson ideas, collaboration strategies, and the reassurance that meaningful partnerships are possible, even within the constraints of public school systems.

Decentering Biomechanics in Dance Kinesiology

Katrina Hawley

Kinesiology is the study of movement, and biomechanics is merely one of many analytical models available to study movement. Yet, when you read many dance kinesiology textbooks, the biomechanical model is presented front and center. This session proposes framing dance kinesiology courses within multiple analytical models taught in relation to one another so that students understand that biomechanics is not right or wrong, but simply one model among many. In this session, we will explore our joints and their movement by comparing tensegrity to biomechanics and tenets of systems theory through ecological and sensorimotor control. This session will illustrate the importance of context in teaching and studying movement. In our brief overview, we will discuss specific and practical ways to implement each model. We will contextualize the tensegrity model as relational, rather than the biomechanical model, which is often taught as the primary or default model. We will cover cuing movement within ecological motor theory and how that might lead to faster movement integration. We will discuss how the sensory system within the nervous system helps our students improve technique subconsciously. And we will also explore the importance of teaching the biomechanical model to help our students advocate for themselves in the doctor's office. After our brief overview, we will illustrate the practical use of multiple anatomical models in movement, such as demi plie, undercurve/overcurve, sidebend, and spiral. Movement teachers will leave with specific strategies for cueing movement, while dance kinesiology instructors will gain tools for contextualizing course content in ways that support synthesis and application within students' dance training and practice. Participants will learn that when students understand the context of multiple analytical models taught in relation to one another, they provide choices rather than conflicts in students' minds.

DEL Dynamic Collaboration Between Dance Educators and Early Childhood Teachers (Ages 3–5)

Catherine Gallant, Danielle Staropoli

This session explores the rich potential for collaboration between dance educators and

Pre-K, nursery school, and early childhood classroom teachers. The DEL team will share models for identifying existing classroom curriculum connections and targeting content and materials that support meaningful dance exploration. Participants will experience a range of approaches to collaboratively creating interdisciplinary dance lessons that integrate classroom vocabulary and content while also addressing key developmental needs such as mood regulation, delayed gratification, and relationship building. While the primary focus will be on movement inspired by children's literature, the session will also demonstrate how dance concepts can be integrated into themes from math, science, music, and social-emotional learning. This workshop will: 1) apply the DEL Dance Framework vocabulary in the early childhood context, 2) provide examples of DEL's Guided Exploration to support children's natural curiosity with movement discovery 3) Examine examples of collaboration between dance educators and early childhood educators, 4) Embody and investigate content from children's literature and other subject areas as a foundation for collaboration, 5) Model techniques and strategies to enrich early childhood dance classes. Participants will be provided with related resources and materials to continue their learning and support future collaborations.

DEL + Japanese: Konnichiwa Literacy + Movement!

Ayaka Kamei

Come dance and learn Japanese! In this experiential workshop, participants will embody Japanese vocabulary and numbers using the Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) model. Through creative movement and guided improvisation, participants will discover how movement can boost engagement, memory, comprehension, and joy while making language learning playful and memorable. The workshop guides participants through multiple literacy strategies within the DEL Lesson model arch. Participants will warm up, explore movements in Japanese, create movement sentences in small groups, perform for each other, reflect, and discuss how to apply these strategies in their own classrooms or programs. Together, participants will explore the question: How can movement bring language to life and make learning fun? By the end, participants will leave with ready-to-use DEL-inspired strategies for teaching any language or creative movement class. The DEL model encourages creativity, artistry, and teamwork, helping participants make learning dynamic, interactive, and innovative. Say "Konnichiwa!" to joyful learning, embodied literacy, and collaboration—and get ready to move, laugh, and learn all at once!

Designing Inclusion at the Point of Creation

Brian Golden

Inclusion is often treated as something added after choreography is complete. A work is made, and access is layered on later through accommodation. This session proposes a different model. What if inclusion is used as a choreographic engine from the beginning? What if access generates the material itself? Grounded in my work as a disabled and neurodivergent choreographer and educator, this interactive lecture and movement session reframes disability as methodology. Living with dyspraxia and auditory processing differences has shaped how I process rhythm, space, and instruction. I often need ideas translated across sensory channels. Over time, that need became a compositional tool. Translation is not

something I add. It is how I build. The session centers on one shared concept: expansion and deflation. We begin with collective observation. A balloon slowly expands and collapses. Participants are invited to notice breath, sound, tension, pacing, and shifts in atmosphere. From there, we move into layered exploration. Expansion and deflation are investigated through breath, muscular tension and release, spatial reach and contraction. Participants choose how they engage. Standing or seated. Moving or writing. Drawing or witnessing. These choices are not accommodations. They are compositional variables that shape the material. Participants begin by writing about the sensations of expanding and deflating. Rather than focusing on narrative, they are encouraged to describe texture, pressure, rhythm, temperature, sensation, and internal shifts. What does expansion feel like in the ribs? What does deflation feel like in the skin? What stretches, tingles, tightens, or softens? The writing centers sensory experience as a source of composition and validates interior awareness as choreographic material. Participants then take their poem or phrase and explore it in their body and voice through the lens of expansion and deflation, crafting choreographic material from the text. A single word might stretch across space. A sentence might collapse into a whisper. Breath might swell, shake, or dissolve. A phrase might expand through gesture while the voice contracts, or the body might fold inward as sound grows. The language becomes a score, and the body becomes its translator. This act of translation connects body and mind. Writing informs movement. Movement reshapes the voice. Voice alters breath. Rather than separating intellectual and physical processes, the session demonstrates how translation integrates them. Expansion and deflation become embodied structures that generate rhythm, phrasing, spatial design, and dynamic contrast. As a choreographic structure, this model produces variation without hierarchy. Instead of asking participants to replicate a fixed phrase, we invite them to interpret and recompose through the participants' chosen style and aesthetic of movement. By the end of the session, participants will have experienced how designing inclusion at the point of creation strengthens artistic rigor, widens authorship, and generates richer material. When inclusion is embedded early, choreography becomes expansive, responsive, and structurally alive.

Developing the Breathing Dancer

Alison Seidenstricker, Rebecca Taylor, ViolaMarie Pitts, Emily-Rose Brock, Nicole Carbone

This interactive session explores how conscious breathwork can transform dancers' physicality, stamina, presence, and overall well-being. Drawing from Irmgard Bartenieff's breathing exercises, Yoga pranayama, Tai Chi breath-movement coordination, Feldenkrais awareness strategies, and meditative practices, this work offers a practical framework for cultivating dancers who breathe with intention and ease. Developed collaboratively with four PK–12 Dance Education students and implemented across elementary, middle, high school, and college classrooms, the project demonstrates how breath-centered pedagogy can be adapted developmentally across sectors. Participants will engage in guided movement explorations, learn classroom-ready applications, and consider how breath awareness supports sustainable technique, trauma-informed practice, and inclusive learning environments. This session invites educators from all settings to unite around a shared goal: developing breathing dancers who

move with clarity, resilience, and embodied intelligence.

Dingolay: Caribbean Roots, Global Stage
Ronald Taylor
Dingolay is a vibrant dance technique rooted in Caribbean tradition, blending Caribbean folk traditions, Modern dance, and Ballet. Its name, a Trinidadian Creole term, meaning "to dance with joyful abandon," capturing expressive, twisting, unusual, liberated and turning movements. This session emphasizes groundedness, fluidity, polyrhythms, and improvisation, combining ancestral rhythms with classical discipline. Participants will explore a movement vocabulary that fosters musicality, alignment, expressive freedom, and cultural awareness. Dingolay is a contemporary inclusive form that honors heritage while engaging dancers of all backgrounds. Attendees will leave with practical tools to enrich performance, teaching, and choreography, experiencing a joyful, dynamic, and culturally rooted approach to movement.

Directing When Care & Dramaturgy Are Intrinsic
Emily Ehling, Les Gray
What happens when care and dramaturgy are intrinsic to a university dance concert? The University of Missouri's inaugural Dance Concert, Catalyst, was held in April 2026. Director Emily Ehling and Dramaturg Dr. Les Gray made all artistic choices through an ethic of care they share as foundational to their research and creative practice. We will share our methods and findings through discussion and physical exercises in this Experiential Workshop. We will focus on the collaboration between director and dramaturg, considering the possibilities that arise when a production dance dramaturg is present throughout the entire choreographic process for an undergraduate production, from intentional conversations about consent to thoughtful inquiry around artistic choices. We will then open the floor for a discussion about challenging and reimagining other established production practices that ought to be challenged and reimagined in the process of directing when creating a university dance concert.

Disability Affinity Group
Rachel Repinz
This affinity group is for NDEO Conference attendees who identify as Disabled or chronically ill. This affinity group will provide space for Disabled and chronically ill attendees to network, share resources, create community, and discuss current topics, news, and personal ideas.

Disruption to Design: The Adjacent Possible
Nicole Flinn, Terri Filips Vaughan, Kathleen Dominiak Treasure, Susannah Keita
This panel emerged from an ongoing series of informal conversations among four dance educators working across K-12, higher education, and private/nonprofit contexts. Each of us has recently experienced unanticipated shifts in role, responsibility, or institutional context- changes not driven by individual choice, but by broader structural disruptions in the field. Rather than focusing on individual challenges, we noticed shared patterns: the collapse or reconfiguration of programs, the blurring of disciplinary boundaries, and increasing expectations that educators adapt quickly to unfamiliar teaching contexts or populations. This session explores the concept of the adjacent possible and the new opportunities that emerge when institutional roles shift, overlap, or are reimagined. Through

a facilitated panel conversation, dance educators from varied sectors examine how peer-based dialogue supports collective sense-making, pedagogical exchange, and professional resilience. The session emphasizes transferable insights rather than sector-specific solutions and concludes with guided audience reflection, inviting participants to connect these ideas to their own teaching contexts and professional pathways.

Diversity in Dance: Bridging Communities
Amal ElWardi
Amal Elwardi, graduate of Saint Mary's College of California MFA in Dance terminal degree program and Adjunct Faculty at Saint Mary's and College of Alameda in the San Francisco Bay Area, provides a pedagogical strategy to offer dance history as a shared embodiment to embrace past, present, and future. This session offers a presentation of unique curriculum development, including local guest artists and lecturers, attendance to local dance performances and festivals, somatic activities that highlight the habits of the American dancing body as conditioned by European colonizers, and discourse on decolonizing dance in academia and the arts. An antiracist lens on history of 20th and 21st century dance follows a profound, timely perspective that offers examination of dismantling white supremacy, problemetizing whiteness in dance in white standpoint, and erasing the Eurocentric views that have wrongly characterized the history and overall definition of the dance art form in the West. By prioritizing diversity in dance though BIPOC and artists with disabilities at the center of the discourse, we create a community of learning where we can question our own histories. We implement critical thinking and creative skills to construct the history that defines and shapes us as collaborative artists of the 21st century who each carry unique intersectionalities. By embodying the urgent need of re-creating our history, one that is able to deconstruct colonial dogma based on the superiority and privilege of Western approaches, we instead focus on a radically inclusive and an antiracist view to shape a supportive future for dance as necessary for the overall wellbeing and growth of community. Students learn about the major figures who influenced the history of dance in the 20th and 21st centuries and we discuss this in the framework of embodying cultural diversity and antiracism. Representing these historical dance figures, esteemed guest artists from around the world share their expertise from extensive careers dancing and teaching professionally for modern dance companies in the United States. Learning outcomes are based on the importance of understanding the context of global issues and their effect on our communities, understandings, and definitions of dance history. Students engage in perspective-taking, which includes the non-dominant view. For example, we begin the semester by reading and discussing provocative material before welcoming local Ohlone tribal elders who share the communal importance of dance as ritual and resistance. This is especially poignant and powerful in acknowledging how the past and present coexist in recent Minnesota Lakota sacred ceremonies that gathered hundreds of locals to honor innocents who lost their lives protecting their basic human rights. We also highlight the importance of all roots of dance as stemming from Africa; we host renown dance scholar, Halifu Osumare, professor Emerita in the Department of African American and African Studies at the University of California, Davis. She shares her journey as a Black dance artist and scholar as written in her memoir, "Dancing in Blackness". Through

firsthand transmission from experts in race, dance, and indigeneity, students experience the inclusion and the neglect of indigeneity in the history of dance as an art form developed in America in the 20th century. Students also study their own lineage and indigeneity by looking at their personal family trees in relation to their dance career family trees. Somatic professionals guide students on methods to consider their ancestral lineage, healing, and wisdom. By coming into our own shared histories, we use somatic tools to free the natural dancing body, to move beyond colonial conditioning into which we were born, and to create the history that we want to live communally as world dance participants.

Divine Feminine in Heels Pedagogy

Kelli Forman

This open-level movement session examines heels technique through an embodied study of archetypal feminine energies and their relationship to shape, musicality, weight shift, and choreographic intention. Situated within contemporary dance pedagogy, the class investigates how qualities such as sensuality, creative force, regality, nurturance, softness, and transformative intensity manifest physically and inform stylistic nuance. Drawing from 18 years of professional heels performance in commercial and burlesque contexts, this session reframes sensuality as disciplined somatic inquiry rather than spectacle. Participants of all genders will explore how cultivating awareness of feminine energetic modalities expands technical clarity, expressive range, and embodied authority. The session is informed by interdisciplinary study in dance pedagogy, yoga instruction, pranayama, meditation, and subtle body awareness frameworks. Breath, energetic intention, and attention practices will be integrated into warm-up, foundational heels technique, improvisational exploration, and choreographic phrase work. Participants will investigate how subtle energetic shifts reorganize alignment, phrasing, texture, and relational presence. Attendees will leave with pedagogical tools for integrating energetic literacy, archetype study, and embodied reflection into choreography, curriculum design, and personal creative practice. Heels are recommended but not required.

Dlala Pantsula! Dance Pedagogy in Critical Times

Andrea Lee

Dlala Pantsula! Dance Pedagogy in Critical Times, is a hands-on experiential session that offers a critical dance pedagogical lens for examining the social, political, and economic forces that shaped the emergence of the South African Pantsula youth movement. Grounded in extensive international collaborative research between the presenter, South African dance artists, community activists, and dance educators, this session demonstrates how Pantsula functions as both a cultural practice and a pedagogical framework for teaching dance in complex and turbulent times. Pantsula is an intergenerational movement culture that unites dance, music, fashion, and community identity while reflecting shared global struggles of youth resistance, survival, and creativity. Through embodied learning, participants will explore how Pantsula developed under oppressive apartheid conditions and how its legacy continues to inform contemporary approaches to culturally responsive dance education. A central concern guiding this proposal is that dance educators often struggle to teach from culturally responsive frameworks that extend beyond their own training and lived experience. While many educators recognize the importance of cultural positionality and the

risks of misappropriation, fear of discomfort can result in reliance on familiar Eurocentric pedagogical models. Attendees will engage in presenter-led demonstrations and collaborative guided practice while learning the unique aspects of Pantsula's form and function- illustrating how complex social and historical themes can be taught through active, community-centered learning in dance. Session materials will include visually rich multimedia from international collaborative field research, interactive workshop handouts, and ready-to-use Pantsula-based curriculum modules for secondary and higher education classrooms. Participant testimonials from a pilot unit, Blow the Whistle: The Morphogenesis of South African Pantsula Dance—From Resistance to Liberation, along with insights from students, artists, and educators, will illustrate how cross-cultural collaboration and embodied practice spark engagement, deepen understanding, and build unity through dance education. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of the South African Pantsula youth movement as a culturally grounded dance form shaped by resistance, community, and creativity. Through movement exploration, dialogue, and shared reflection, participants will gain insight into how Pantsula's form and function emerged from historical and social conditions that many dance educators may be unfamiliar with. By engaging in embodied practice and collective inquiry, this session highlights dance education as a site of unity and cultural exchange- demonstrating that through unity, something more positive and powerful is always born from the struggle itself.

Dynamic Partnering

Nile Russell

We will explore and play with the fundamentals of partnering through various modes of access, including intention, sight, and touch. From the floor to communal practice, we will use improvisation, weight-sharing, and collaborative composition to inspire new ideas and build confidence in partnering skills. Let's get lifted!

E

Early Childhood Education Special Interest Group

Nancy Ng

Meet your colleagues who care about the education, health, and well-being of our world's youngest children. Dance educators new to teaching, as well as those who have taught children for decades are welcome to learn from each other. Join the conversation, mingle and dance with peers, and share questions and curricula that inspire your teaching practice now.

Early Ed: The Architecture of Master Pedagogy

Annika Mossberg

In the traditional hierarchy of dance education, early childhood classes are often viewed as the "bottom", a place for entry-level teachers to gain experience before moving on to "serious" technical training. This session challenges that hierarchy, asserting that early childhood pedagogy is the master-blueprint for all successful instruction. If a teacher cannot lead a room of three-year-olds through a seamless transition, they have yet to master the fundamental architecture of engagement required for any level of dance. This experiential workshop invites educators from every sector: Studio, K-12, and Higher Education, to dismantle the "cute" stereotype of early dance and replace it with a sophisticated understanding of instructional architecture. We begin with "The

Invisible Lead," an immersion exercise where attendees participate in a professional-level session led through the structural mechanics of an elite early childhood class. By observing their own somatic and nervous system responses to rhythmic cues, spatial rituals, and sensory-motor scaffolding, participants will experience the power of a masterfully regulated room. Following the immersion, we move into the "Pedagogical Translation" phase. Here, we decode exactly how early childhood tactics map to universal teaching truths. We will explore how "toddler logic" provides the solution to high-level technical hurdles, such as improving core stability in advanced teens through external focus cues or resolving college-level artistic blocks through guided discovery frameworks. The session culminates in the "Synergy Lab," a collaborative problem-solving workshop. Attendees will work across sectors to apply these "Architect's Blueprints" to common classroom challenges, from managing neurodivergent populations to bridging the gap between recreational and conservatory-track students. Participants will leave with a new perspective on the "root system" of our field and a physical "Architect's Blueprint Card" containing actionable strategies to improve room management and skill progression in any class. Join to discover why the youngest dancer in the building holds the key to the most advanced pedagogy in the field. Early childhood is not the start of the journey; it is the master-key to the entire dance ecosystem.

Elementary Academic Milestones through Dance

Liz Salganek

Dance and music can be powerful tools for reinforcing and enhancing understanding and absorption of academic curriculum for elementary school students. This experiential session will be presented by National Dance Institute of New Mexico (NDI New Mexico) to share elements of NDI New Mexico's In-School curriculum that support the achievement of key academic milestones including math, science, English language arts, physical education, and health/nutrition. NDI New Mexico has served over 125,000 children in public schools across New Mexico for over 30 years. Our partnership with public schools is founded on the belief arts play an important role in a child's education, and that arts integration can support children's academic success. This support comes from the way the dance class helps students develop focus, set and reach goals, persevere through challenges, and build other skills that set the foundation for learning. Class can also directly support academic outcomes through reinforcing specific milestones through imaginative, embodied, and fun dance activities. NDI New Mexico curriculum has evolved over time to incorporate elements of academic tie-ins, health and nutrition objectives through our HIP to Be Fit ® curriculum, as well as connection with P.E. and Music curriculum. In program evaluations, public school teachers reflect on their appreciation of the creativity, self-expression and teamwork that is created in the classroom in NDI New Mexico classes, as well as reflecting on the ways we support their academic priorities. The session will be led by Liz Salganek, Artistic Director of NDI New Mexico, along with NDI New Mexico Outreach Program Directors, and will engage participants in an interactive movement experience that shares examples of these modes of integration of dance with key academic standards. Participants will come away with information and knowledge that can be applied in K-12 education setting as well as in studios and other community-based programs.

Elevating Ballet Education for Dance Teachers

Elise Drew Leon, Katrina Killian

In this panel led by Director of People and Culture Elise Drew León, we will center the impact of the School of American Ballet's National Visiting Fellows Program (NVF) on U.S. based ballet educators committed to serving diverse student populations. Through conversation with SAB's Director of Preparatory/Children's Division Katrina Killian and notable Fellows alumni, we will present the NVF program as a model for lasting service to the field, all the while illustrating the lessons learned along the way. The School of American Ballet (SAB) established the National Visiting Fellows Program in 2015 to cultivate relationships with ballet teachers from around the country who are committed to training students from diverse backgrounds. Born out of the school's formal Diversity Initiative, which was launched in 2012, the NVF program seeks to provide teachers with access to SAB training to better expose and equip young dancers for the demands of the Balanchine ballet style. Up until that time, SAB training remained largely inaccessible to teachers who were not trained at SAB, and this created a significant barrier for students seeking admittance to this prestigious ballet academy and its affiliate the New York City Ballet. Propelling more dancers of color to professional stages requires significant and meaningful engagement with a broader group of teachers on the frontlines of students' artistic development, and this program endeavors to do so. Fellows spend two fully funded, week-long residencies at SAB observing a range of SAB classes, meeting with faculty to discuss SAB's curriculum and strategies for progression, teaching SAB students and receiving faculty feedback, and discussing relevant topics in dance education with staff and faculty. Participants' affiliated dance studios receive a $5,000 Studio Award, to be applied to existing or new programming, thereby continuing investment in these dance communities beyond the fellowship year. To date, the NVF program has supported 48 teachers from across the country in their pedagogical development and facilitated essential conversations and connections between participants and SAB faculty and administrators in pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable art form. Continued partnerships with Fellows alumni have led to national workshops for teachers and students in Atlanta, GA; Baltimore, MD; Chicago, IL; Lubbock, TX, New Orleans, LA; and Mobile, AL. This panel will highlight recent program outcomes and advancements, successes and challenges, alumni stories, and the impact of building lasting relationships to further access and achievement in ballet for dancers of all backgrounds.

Embodied Archives: Motion Modeling for Dance

Ashley Brown

What happens when we put emerging technology in direct conversation with embodied technique? Can AI tools deepen our understanding of dance—or do they risk flattening it? This interactive session invites participants to step into that question through demonstration, dialogue, and hands-on analysis. Using the Martha Graham Technique™ as a focused case study, we will explore how motion capture, computer vision, and wearable technologies are beginning to reshape dance documentation and pedagogy—and why dance expertise must guide their development. Participants will view side-by-side comparisons of live or recorded Graham movement and motion capture visualizations, examining where current skeletal models succeed and where they misrepresent essential principles such as

contraction and release, spirals, dynamic timing, and breath-driven initiation. Through guided prompts, attendees will be invited to identify what feels accurate, what feels absent, and why those distinctions matter pedagogically. The session will also include exploration of emerging tools such as Meta smart glasses for observational analysis and feedback. We will discuss how wearable technology might support rehearsal documentation, teacher reflection, and student feedback loops—while also addressing ethical considerations, consent, and the limits of data-driven evaluation. In addition, attendees will receive a preview of a developing Martha Graham Technique™ app prototype designed as a three-dimensional technical manual. The prototype integrates motion modeling, layered annotations, historical context, and interactive viewing capabilities that allow users to rotate movement in space, isolate body regions, compare interpretations across dancers, and connect physical execution to technical language. Participants will experience how such a tool could function across sectors—from university conservatories to K–12 programs and community studios. Rather than positioning technology as a replacement for lineage-based transmission, this session frames digital tools as collaborative partners—ones that must be shaped by educators, historians, and artists working together. Rooted in the conference theme of SYNERGY, the session encourages dialogue across teaching environments about how we can collectively influence emerging technologies to expand access, strengthen documentation, and honor embodied knowledge. Attendees will leave with concrete questions, practical evaluation frameworks, and inspiration for interdisciplinary collaboration—ensuring that as innovation enters our studios and classrooms, it does so in service of Dance Education for ALL.

Embodied Ethics Across Dance Genre and Generation

Catherine Cabeen

This project explores how different genres of dance impact different generations of expert practitioners' experiences of motivation, interoception, empathy, and ecological awareness. Central to this work is the premise that dance functions not merely as an artistic or physical activity but as a culturally grounded, embodied epistemology, through which knowledge, ethics, and values are transmitted, negotiated, and transformed. To assess motivation, interoception, empathy, and ecological awareness, we administered a survey to dance educators in all 50 United States and Puerto Rico during the Fall of 2025, (n=90) which will be followed by interviews in Spring 2026 (n=20). To conduct cross-genre and cross-generation analyses, the survey collected participants' ages and what genres of dance they have expertise in, followed by a motivation questionnaire (Alter, 1997), the Multidimensional Assessment of Interoceptive Awareness (Mehling et al., 2012), Interpersonal Reactivity Index (Davis, 1980), and Nature Relatedness Scale (Nisbet et al., 2009). These combined measures assess each educator's motivation to dance, and their connection to self, others, and the natural world. Survey participants who volunteered for 20-minute follow-up interview will be engaged via zoom during Spring 2026. The interviews will explore how the educator makes explicit, or subverts, the embodied ethics that underlie the aesthetics of the techniques they teach, how that manifests in their pedagogy, and how that work is perceived by the institution and/or community they teach in. As globalization continues to shape cultural production and transmission, aesthetic and ethical values within

various subcultures of dance training and performance are undergoing notable transformations. These shifts have contributed to generational and genre-based divides within the field. The present project aims to collect empirical data to assist dance educators in bridging these divides and in recognizing the ethical, as well as aesthetic, diversity that emerges from culturally distinct approaches to dance education. A deeper understanding of these differences may support dance departments and studios in developing culturally relevant pedagogies and curricula. This study contributes to several underexplored areas in developmental psychology, dance studies, and embodied cognition. First, it responds to the call for more culturally inclusive and age-diverse research in dance and psychological science. Second, it bridges the gap between theoretical and empirical work by providing data on somatic values. Finally, it offers insights into how ethical values are transmitted through embodied practices. This project is being mentored by Cabeen's PhD advisor, Dr. Jennifer E. Drake.

Embodied Literacy Through Dance

Elena Sundick

Embodied Literacy Through Dance explores how creative movement can be used as a powerful tool to support literacy learning in early childhood and elementary education. This session highlights storytelling through movement as an interdisciplinary approach that aligns dance education with classroom literacy goals, offering educators practical strategies to integrate movement meaningfully into academic learning environments. Grounded in school-based teaching artist practice, the session demonstrates how narrative elements such as sequencing, character development, and setting can be embodied through movement phrases and simple choreographic structures. Participants will explore how concepts like beginning, middle, and end naturally parallel movement progression, allowing students to physically experience story structure while strengthening comprehension and recall. Using children's literature as inspiration, the session models how books can serve as entry points for imaginative movement exploration that supports literacy standards alongside dance standards. This interactive session emphasizes accessibility, inclusion, and differentiation. Attendees will experience how storytelling through movement provides multiple entry points for diverse learners, including students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students with varied learning styles. Strategies such as gesture-based movement, tactile props, visual supports, multilingual prompts, and adaptable spatial pathways will be shared to ensure all students can meaningfully participate. The session also addresses culturally responsive teaching through intentional book selection, music choices, and discussion prompts that honor students' identities and lived experiences. Participants will engage in guided movement activities, collaborative reflection, and discussion that mirror classroom practice. Educators will leave with concrete tools they can immediately implement, including adaptable lesson frameworks, movement prompts, and strategies for scaffolding and differentiation. The session also offers guidance on advocating for dance as a partner to literacy instruction by demonstrating how movement can deepen understanding rather than compete with instructional time. Designed for dance educators, classroom teachers, and teaching artists, Embodied Literacy Through Dance empowers participants to use movement as an inclusive, engaging, and standards-aligned

approach to literacy learning that centers creativity, equity, and student voice.

Embodied Rhythm: Dalcroze in Dance
Dani Schofer
This immersive workshop will focus on teaching applications of Dalcroze Eurhythmics on the field of dance education, specifically focusing on practical applications for multiple sectors including higher education, dance studios, private sector workshops, and dance studio teaching. Dalcroze Eurhythmics, a music education tool developed by Emile Jacques-Dalcroze in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, uses embodied movement to teach musicality, technical proficiency, and ensemble music fluency to musicians and students of all ages. Though dance history has documented clear collaboration between Dalcroze's descendants and twentieth-century dance pioneers, including Vaslav Nijinsky, Mary Wigman, Rudolph Laban, and Hanya Holm, few dance education spaces integrate Dalcroze pedagogy into regular embodied curriculum. Dalcroze Eurhythmics enhances ensemble skills among dancers while building musical precision, mindfulness, and individual artistry. This workshop will serve as a dual movement workshop and curriculum-planning session, offering both experiential and written examples of Dalcroze applications to teaching dance technique and creative movement classes. Participants will practice the traditional Dalcroze movement exercises, quick reaction, follow, and canon. Due to Dalcroze's prioritization of live music prompts, the facilitator will provide their own workshop accompaniment (either live or recorded). We will subsequently discuss ways to adapt exercises for diverse technique styles and accompaniment resources. In addition to providing a practical understanding of Dalcroze movement exercises, the workshop will highlight the benefits of Dalcroze education in offering differentiated instruction opportunities and supporting student-centered experiential learning of the material. Participants will receive adapted exercises that address a range of physical mobility and sensory needs in teaching spaces. We will discuss how socio-emotional and learning needs might differ for these exercises depending on the course's learning environment (higher education, dance studio, K-12). This workshop ultimately will consider Dalcroze as a bridge between the undeniably interconnected fields of movement and music pedagogy, offering educators practical tools for enhancing artistic synergy within their teaching spaces.

Embodied Synergy: Circling with Ganggangsullae
Boram Yi
Ganggangsullae is a traditional Korean circle dance where participants hold hands, move in a circular formation, and share rhythm and song to foster embodied connectivity. This 70-minute experiential workshop offers a mix of movement-based activities and short presentation segments to explore Ganggangsullae as a pedagogical framework for cultural exchange, collaboration, belonging, and inclusive dance education across sectors. Designed for dance educators and teaching artists in higher education, pre-K-12, studios, and community settings, the session welcomes participants of all movement backgrounds and requires no prior dance experience or knowledge of Ganggangsullae. Participants will actively move throughout the workshop while also engaging in brief pedagogical framing that supports clear transfer to teaching practice.Participants will learn core principles of the dance—shared rhythm, circular pathways,

collective timing, and relational awareness, and then explore how these principles can be adapted for diverse learners and contexts. Rather than treating Ganggangsullae as a fixed cultural repertoire, the session invites participants to engage in embodied meaning-making and creative transformation based on lived experience. The workshop includes: (1) an opening mini-lecture discussing the origins and meanings of Ganggangsullae in Korean society and the conference theme of synergy as related to the dance; (2) guided movement activities that build group attunement through breath, rhythm, and spatial awareness; (3) learning foundational movement phrases and experimenting with variations through partner and small-group tasks; (4) a creative segment where participants use prompts to generate short movement phrases or choreographic structures; and (5) a closing presentation and discussion focused on teaching transfer, inclusive facilitation strategies, and practical adaptations for classrooms, studios, and community settings. Attendees will leave with a clear, repeatable lesson structure (learn–explore–expand–reflect), adaptable prompts, and concrete tools to support equity and access (seated options, reduced traveling, alternatives to touch, and consent-based proximity choices). Participants will also receive examples of how to scale activities for different ages, experience levels, and learning environments. Aligned with "SYNERGY: Uniting to Progress the Field of Dance Education," this session demonstrates how a community-based circle dance can become an accessible teaching framework that strengthens collaboration across dance education communities.

Embodied Synergy: Hip Hop & Street Dance
Ashley Tate

Hip hop and street dance have the power to tell stories, shift perspectives, and bring people together in meaningful ways. Rooted in culture, community, and lived experience, these forms offer more than movement vocabulary. They create space for expression, dialogue, and connection. This session blends hip hop and street dance movements with conversation to explore how these practices can support inclusive teaching and collaboration across diverse dance environments. Participants will move through partner and small-group activities, freestyle exploration, and collaborative phrase-building while also discussing ways to teach students with varying experience levels, backgrounds, and learning needs. We will consider how educators in K-12 programs, studios, universities, and community spaces can learn from one another and build relationships that benefit students beyond a single classroom or program. The session also reflects on how time spent outside our usual teaching environments, including working with guest artists and educators from other sectors of hip hop and street dance, can reshape our classroom approaches. Attendees will leave with activities, teaching strategies, and planning approaches they can apply in their own work. The goal is to support learning spaces that value collaboration, make room for cultural understanding, and help students grow in confidence, expression, and connection through hip hop and street dance practices.

Embodiment and Authentic Movement
Lindsay Gilmour

As a modern/contemporary technique teacher at a University, I often have students with rigorous training but often lacking a deep embodied knowing of self. Their movements are technically impressive but can lack a certain

amount of presence and embodied awareness. I am interested in how the theory and practice of the Discipline of Authentic Movement can open pathways for students to experience the felt sensations of moving. What is the felt sensation of an outstretched arm, a plié or simply being still? How do outer movements affect one's inner experience? The Discipline of Authentic Movement has its roots in the work of Mary Starks Whitehouse and was further evolved by Janet Adler. The practice emphasizes embodied witness consciousness in which one witnesses both the exterior environment as well as one's inner world. It is a contemplative, somatic practice where one moves with eyes closed following inner impulses with a non-judgmental witness. In this class we will move with eyes closed for three10-minute segments. After each movement segment we will draw body maps and write from the felt experience of the body and then share in small groups. The session will conclude with a discussion about how somatic practices can deepen a student's experience of being and moving.

Emergent Strategies: College Dance as Business
Madia Cooper-Ashirifi
Dance college departments, especially small programs, are engaging in business strategies when attempting to raise the bar in delivering high-quality, equity-minded, culturally diverse, and career readiness approaches to majors. How can collegiate dance programs further the field of career readiness and skill building for students? How can collegiate dance programs assist in growing businesses and organizations through work-base learning engagements? It is challenging to bring together everyone to the table to thoughtfully incorporate new practices, and diversify curricula to ensure every student and faculties' needs are met beyond the status quo. We, at Brenau Dance, a program situated in a Women's College have transformed our program progressively to increase students' artistic and business acumen and build savvy artists utilizing practices to enhance their career agility. Dance programs and universities have seen a tremendous decrease of enrollment and closure in recent years. And prior to covid, most programs were struggling to retain students and their program due to budgetary constraints and students partaking in gap years or alternate education routes. With success comes failures and repeats of revised plans. Thus, our intention of our panel workshop is to showcase challenges and acknowledge wins in restructuring a small program to a robust program to meet the needs of every dance student through business partnerships and internships. Our panel shares a framework to transform ideas into actionable plans and implement them that aligns with the constantly changing atmosphere within performing arts. We narrowed our approach to three main factors to guide our goals: 1) community engagements; 2) work-base learning projects; and 3) progressive internship opportunities. The components intersect to increase self-relevance among our students, to build our program's needs for supporting students' entrepreneurial creative outputs, and to create a safe space for new and current students to thrive as compassionate and business-minded creative global citizens.

Emotional Intelligence & Ethical Assessment
Kaysie S. Brown, Nimisha Mahiyaria, Dale Schmid
This session bridges research and practice by highlighting two innovative Praxis Projects—action-research–oriented, andragogic self-studies developed by Teachers College

doctoral candidates Kaysie Brown and Nimisha Mahiyaria and facilitated by TC faculty member, Dr. Dale Schmid. Kaysie's research investigates the role of emotional intelligence in sustaining dance educators, addressing burnout and revitalizing leadership across the five domains of Emotional Intelligence as a framework for teacher well-being. Nimisha's work addresses the lack of empirical, equity-centered research on arts assessment in U.S. higher education. She is also examining (and promulgating) assessment models in which criteria and feedback are co-constructed by teachers and students to promote agency, transparency, and inclusion. The central concern driving this inquiry is that traditional dance assessment practices often produce harm through comparison, body shaming, and cultural erasure. This highly interactive 70-minute workshop invites dance educators to explore the powerful intersection of social-emotional learning (SEL) and ethical assessment in teacher practice. Grounded in action research and teacher preparation, the session centers on educators' emotional intelligence alongside concrete, adaptable assessment strategies that can be implemented immediately across diverse teaching contexts.The workshop begins with an embodied SEL warm-up that experientially engages core competencies—including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making—positioning the body as both site and source of learning. A facilitated group discussion follows, surfacing the emotional, relational, and ethical dimensions of dance assessment and examining how assessment practices shape classroom climate, belonging, and power. Participants will examine how commonly used rubrics often privilege Eurocentric techniques, thin and able-bodied ideals, and dominant aesthetic norms. The session offers concrete strategies for disrupting these patterns through the co-construction of assessment criteria that honor epistemic heterogeneity, cultural plurality, and multiple movement vocabularies. Rather than treating assessment as neutral or technical, we frame it as an ethical act with real consequences for student belonging, identity, and agency. Designed for K–12, higher education, and studio teachers, this session supports educators eager to rethink how they "see," name, and nurture justice-centered and student-centric learning in dance. By prioritizing student agency and educator well-being, the workshop offers practical, scalable frameworks for integrating SEL and ethical assessment—advancing the shared vision of Dance Education for All. This approach will help ensure that teachers understand "why" ethical SEL assessment practices are essential, and know how to co-create them in their contexts.

Ensemble Thinking™ inclusive pedagogical practice

Margaret Paek

Ensemble Thinking™ is a continually developing system of collaborative group dance performance practices developed by Dr. Nina Martin with Lower Left performance collective. These compositional scores refine the individual's ability to perceive, initiate, and support collective action and provide discernible techniques for building artistic and social community. Ensemble Thinking™'s conceptual nature allows for a wide range of access across multiple ages, backgrounds, aesthetics, and physical capabilities. In this experiential, experimental workshop, we will practice and observe some Ensemble Thinking™ scores together. As a group, we will collect observations from the experience and discuss applications. Powerful tools for

inclusivity are embedded in the pedagogy and practice of Ensemble Thinking™, and it is practiced in various settings, including with parents and children, in university courses, as accessible/inclusive workshop content, and within studio and professional companies. We will experience and think through how one might use this system and its approaches for creating dances, connection, clarity, and community.

Envisioning Democracy with Fan Dancing

Peggy Hongduc Nguyen

Prompted by the "Stop AAPI Hate" campaign and anti-immigrant rhetoric from our presidential administration, I'm compelled to expand our K-6 Creative Dance curriculum to include AAPI Dance forms and narratives to cultivate a culture of creativity, compassion, and community. In this workshop, we will dance with my favorite prop--the Fan and apply a historically and culturally responsive framework to transform our Dance classrooms into democratic spaces. Participants will engage in a curation of inspiring historical sources, my picture book Zodiac Animals for Movers and a choreographic process that uses Language of Dance® (LOD) as a dance literacy tool to compose a Fan dance that celebrates individual expression, the intersections that connect us, and our collective power to move as one.

Evidence: A Synergy between Dance and Learning

Sandra Minton

The session will be approached using scientific research and relevant articles supporting the idea that learning is a synergy of mind and body. The presenter will provide recent research from multiple disciplines (neuroscience, cognitive psychology, education and dance education) which support the concept that learning is an embodiment of mind and body—an idea ignored by many in education who rely on standardized testing to prove what students learn. Such tests produce concrete, quantitative content, but much of what students learn is less concrete and it is in the qualitative sphere where dance can make educational contributions. Thus, psychologists are beginning to accept the idea of embodied cognition (Collins, 2019), while some neuroscientists discuss learning in relationship to physical processes. For example, Ramachandran (2011) believed embodied cognition is shaped by its connections to the body, while Willis (2020) described memory as a physical process in which brain neurons form patterned connections. Similarly, educators indicated the role of the body in learning deserves more attention (Hrach, 2021), and that gestures are connected to learning and knowing (Nasir, et al., 2021). In terms of embodied cognition, dance educators learned that group choreography stimulated thinking (Giguere, 2021), encompassed the idea that cognition is enactive and one's actions can modify the environment (Henley, 2021), and BrainDance activities caused students to be more focused (Green Gilbert, 2019). In terms of diversity, there is a mismatch between how schools teach and how students learn (Darling-Hammond, 2010), but dance can often bridge this gap because it is an effective mode of intercultural communication (Warburton, 2017) and can support special education and minority students (Bonbright, 2013). The New Zealand secondary school curriculum is an example of diversity education in action. To emphasize inclusion students, create choreography in response to indigenous inspirations. Understanding dance in terms of the bodily way of knowing and as a mind-body

endeavor could lead to a more equitable way to study all dance genres and encourage cross-cultural communication in a more inclusive manner.

Experiencing Practice in Ballet Technique Class
Alaina Wilson
This research-based session shares findings from a qualitative pilot study exploring how long-term adult ballet dancers experience practice in drop-in ballet technique classes. Focusing on dancers with ten or more years of ballet experience, the study examines how ballet technique is lived and felt through ongoing practice experiences. By centering participants' length of engagement with ballet rather than professional status in the dance field, the research intends to deemphasize professional-amateur labels and offers a more inclusive and expansive view of ballet participation. Using in-depth interviews to collect data, the study explores how long-term dancers experience drop-in ballet technique classes and how technique provides structure for their physical and sensory experiences. The research also uses poetic transcription as a creative, arts-based method for representing dancers' embodied experiences. Participants' accounts reveal experience-based understandings of technique as it unfolds in real time during class, shaped by sensation, attention, and intention. One of the central themes that emerged across dancers' accounts was "organizing". Dancers described drop-in ballet class as a space where their bodies, focus, and sensations become more organized over the course of class. Analysis highlighted three connected aspects of organizing: the process of organizing during class, the feeling of being organized, and the benefits that emerge from this process, such as clarity, agency, and a sense of continuity in practice. These findings suggest that organizing is an embodied process through which dancers align what they feel with implicit embodied understandings of what they are working towards feeling, influencing how they prepare, focus, and move through class. This session invites conversation across studio, community, higher education, and professional settings around shared questions of practice, teaching, and dancer longevity in relation to ballet. By highlighting the lived experiences of long-term dancers in a community-based context, the research offers insights relevant to educators working with diverse ages, backgrounds, and experience levels. Attendees can expect a research presentation paired with brief reflective prompts that encourage attendees to make connections to their own teaching or learning experiences. The session contributes to ongoing dialogue about the role of ballet technique as a sustaining, lived practice within dance education.

Exploring the Power of Synergy through the Language of Dance®
Shana Habel
Synergy is a powerful and joyful concept which speaks to us of a whole that is more than the sum of its parts. It goes beyond collaboration and encompasses working together toward a common goal that cannot be met by individuals alone. Dance allows us to experience this energetic field in an embodied way through a combination of creative and relational energy. In this session, we will explore synergy through Anne Hutchinson Guest's seminal Language of Dance® Approach. Participants will delve into fundamental movement concepts symbolized in the Movement Alphabet, sensing the possibilities of each. Using this embodied information, they will interpret a common movement score with individual interpretations becoming the "stuff" of an interactive group

movement experience, channeling the power of synergy. Time will be given to discuss 1) how the parts magnified the whole, or the ways in which individual voice reflected a common interpretive goal, and 2) the effects of approaching this creative individual and group effort through the lens of the Language of Dance®. Participants will be challenged to visualize how the format of our session might translate into their classrooms, studios or other dance communities and how the synergistic possibilities of this experience might be heightened or deepened. Very importantly, it is hoped that participants will experience and be inspired to explore the Language of Dance® as a practical and creative pedagogical tool for building movement knowledge, nurturing creative possibilities and fostering an inclusive environment where choice and voice are honed and honored.

F

Facilitating "Corrective Experiences" with Ballet

Rosie Elliott

How many times have you heard dancers say, "I don't do ballet anymore"? Or perhaps you yourself have stepped away from a form you once loved because of harmful experiences within it. This session invites dance educators to critically examine ballet pedagogy through the lens of Corrective Experiences, a psychotherapeutic concept that describes how healing can occur through new, affirming encounters that challenge previously internalized harm. Drawing from published qualitative research, this session explores how trauma-informed, student-centered approaches to ballet can support dancers in repairing their relationship to the form. The research includes in-depth interviews with adult ballet dancers who returned to ballet after periods of disengagement, alongside the presenter's own lived experience as a ballet dancer, choreographer, and educator. Participants' narratives reveal how revisiting ballet in environments that prioritize consent, autonomy, and affirmation can enable dancers to reconstruct their sense of self-worth, identity, and agency.The session introduces the concept of "Corrective Pedagogy," a framework that asks educators to consider dancers' prior experiences as integral to how they show up in the studio. Rather than treating ballet as a neutral technique, Corrective Pedagogy emphasizes the importance of naming harm, disrupting hierarchical norms, and intentionally designing learning environments that challenge dancers' negative expectations of the form. Through this lens, ballet becomes not only a technical practice, but a site for healing, choice-making, and re-authoring embodied narratives. This session will be interactive and reflective. Attendees can expect a combination of brief lecture, guided discussion, and practical prompts that invite them to reflect on their own training histories and teaching practices. Participants will leave with concrete strategies for implementing trauma-informed principles in ballet classrooms across secondary, higher education, private studios, and community settings.

Finding Grace Through Partnership and Creativity

Rachel McCaulsky, Deborah Damast, Erin Lally, Rachael Lieblein-Jurbala, Heidi Miller

Finding Grace is a collaborative curriculum project developed by Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs and the 92NY Dance Education Laboratory (DEL), grounded in a

shared commitment to making dance accessible to all learners. Inspired by Ronald K. Brown's acclaimed work Grace, the curriculum connects dance practice with themes of resilience, community, and humanity, while providing inclusive tools for diverse learning environments. Supported by the Arnhold Foundation and shaped by artists and educators across both organizations, the curriculum is now being implemented in schools and communities nationwide. This interactive session centers on participant experience, inviting attendees to move, reflect, and engage directly with the Finding Grace curriculum. Participants will take part in a Ronald K. Brown style warm-up, learn movement phrases drawn from Grace, and explore strategies for guiding students through creative and reflective movement processes connected to themes of forgiveness, perseverance, and grace. Facilitators will guide participants through key components of the free, ready-to-use curriculum, including lesson structures, instructional videos, and inclusive teaching supports designed for all learners. Attendees will also gain insight into how artistic partnerships between cultural institutions and educational organizations can support equitable access to dance education across varied learning settings. Participants will leave the session with practical tools and resources they can immediately apply in classrooms, studios, and community programs. They will gain hands-on experience with movement practices grounded in the Finding Grace curriculum, strategies for building inclusive dance environments, and concrete examples of how cross-institutional partnerships can expand opportunities for students and educators. All attendees will receive access to the Finding Grace curriculum and guidance on adapting materials for their own communities. This session is designed for educators, artists, and administrators seeking both practical teaching resources and models for collaboration that place access, artistry, and community at the center of dance education.

Fit2Move™: Forming an All Abilities Class

Garley 'GiGi' Briggs

Originally curated from GiGi Tonye's Fit2Move™ program, this session will enable educators and participants to explore the use of 'all abilities' lesson planning, class development and exploratory movement activities that support a unification with children with disabilities and children with non-disabilities in a collective class. This session will highlight the following: show how educators can encourage all abilities in the class to explore dance and movement in their own creative way, identify how children enhance and explore their own individual and collective artistic expression, social, motor-neuro and emotional skills through elements dance and Brain Dance and movement with audio, visual, and tactical aids, as well as review safety considerations in all abilities classrooms that ensure comfortability for all in the space as well as an environment of acceptance and support. The session will give educators through each step of the process in relation lesson planning for children with disabilities as well with this program. This is a licensed program.

Flamenco Workshop

Deanna Encinias

In this workshop we will discover the history of flamenco, explore musical rhythms, analyze traditional flamenco songs, learn a basic dance, and how the art form comes together. Flamenco shoes are welcome, although not necessary.

Come with a hard-soled shoe with a wide heel, or even tennis shoes. ¡Olé!

From Dunham to Deep Root: Lineage as Pedagogy

Camille Weanquoi

Katherine Dunham's work offers more than a codified technique; it models an approach to dance education grounded in research, cultural context, ritual and structure, and community accountability. This session examines Dunham's interdisciplinary methodology as a foundation for contemporary culturally responsive pedagogy and introduces Deep Root Methodology™ as an evolved framework that extends these principles into present-day classrooms. Framed within the 2026 conference theme Synergy, this experiential workshop explores the relationship between lineage and innovation. Participants will engage in guided Dunham-based movement explorations highlighting principles such as polycentrism, articulation, rhythmic layering, and groundedness. Movement practices will be contextualized through a discussion of Dunham's anthropological fieldwork and her commitment to honoring diasporic aesthetic intelligence within academic spaces. The session then bridges Dunham's model to Deep Root Methodology™, a five-pillar framework (Reclamation, Ritual, Reflection, Rehearsal, Reimagination) developed to support culturally responsive, community-centered dance education across K–12, higher education, and studio settings. Participants will examine how Dunham's integration of research, ritual, and performance informs contemporary strategies for teaching identity, lineage, and creative process with rigor and care. Rather than positioning Deep Root as a departure from tradition, this workshop presents it as a continuation of Dunham's interdisciplinary ethos. Attendees will explore how to: Integrate cultural and historical framing into technique classes, Teach lineage alongside movement vocabulary, Design ritual structures that build focus and community, Connect research to creative inquiry, and Develop reflective practices that affirm student identity. The emphasis is on pedagogical translation rather than repertoire mastery. Educators will leave with adaptable frameworks for integrating cultural inquiry into their own genres while maintaining technical clarity and accountability. By tracing a continuum from Dunham's ethnographic practice to contemporary classroom structures, this session invites educators to consider how lineage can inform innovation. It positions culturally grounded teaching not as an add-on, but as an essential dimension of rigorous and ethical dance education.

From Findings to Floors: Dance Access

Silva Laukkanen, Bradford Chin, Mark Tomasic, Brandy Mimms, Rachel Repinz

This panel is shaped by this year's theme of synergy: when educators and institutions work together, impact exceeds what any one sector or region can achieve alone. The concern is that inclusive dance education for people with disabilities remains uneven nationwide, and progress too often depends on isolated champions rather than coordinated ecosystems. Drawing from four Regional Gatherings, panelists will discuss the actions, outcomes, and next steps that emerged when dance educators with and without disabilities, and cross-sector partners came together across K–12 schools, higher education, studios, and community programs. Each representative will share a concise regional snapshot of what was identified as most urgent, what strategies were implemented or set in motion, and what

changes are already underway to advance barrier-free dance education.

From Firebird to Flight: Preschool Creative Ballet

Terry Goetz

How can poetry take flight in the preschool dance class? Inspired by Misty Copeland's Firebird, participants will experience a Brain-Compatible Dance Education (BCDE) model that layers story, sensation, and structure within a clear five-part lesson plan. Through BrainDance, guided exploration, skill development, creating, and reflection, poetic imagery is translated into developmentally appropriate movement, nurturing imagination while building coordination, focus, and confidence. Participants explore how children's literature, ballet heritage, and dance concepts can come together to create an artistically rich, inclusive preschool class. Bridging studio, school, and community teaching contexts, this session demonstrates how one adaptable five-part learning plan can travel across sectors, offering shared language, developmental progression, and space for self-expression within early childhood dance settings. Participants will leave with renewed confidence in how simple, creative structures can support deep learning and joyful engagement in young dancers.

G

Gather, Develop, Impart: A Roll Down Body History

Elizabeth Johnson, Luc Vanier

During our MFA studies at the University of Illinois, in her movement practice classes, our teacher, mentor, and now collaborator and friend, Sara Hook, introduced graduate students to a set, yet ever-evolving movement sequence that began every class. Ever since, the scaffolding of that sequence and its actual movement have been a regular personal practice that has served multiple functions: a grounding professional warm-up, meditation, cataloging of somatic explorations, and, most poignantly, the archiving of our own somatic journeys in dance and dance pedagogy. For twenty-five years now, what we reference as the "Roll Down" has been a consistent feature of the contemporary technique and somatics courses we have taught in undergraduate and graduate programs and our teaching in Dance and community spaces in South America. Initially ensconced in the Laban/Bartenieff paradigm, the Roll Down has become an embodied repository and lab of layered somatic concepts we continue to explore and, like Hook's work, is always shifting, evolving, adding, subtracting, and integrating. In this movement session, participants will learn the Roll Down and then begin to uncover the multiple somatic frameworks that underlie the movement sequence. The Roll Down emphasizes awareness of the head-pelvis relationship, clarity of joint actions, shaping, functional and poetic imagery, and coordinational patterns. Movers will learn how the influences of the Bartenieff Fundamentals (Basic Six and Patterns of Coordination/Total Body Movement), the Dart Procedures, Framework for Integration, Body-Mind Centering®, and Dynamic Embodiment® are situated within the sequence, as well as contemplate how their bodily histories might be sourced and organized to inform their own movement teaching.

Georgia on the Floor: Building a State Dance Asses

Cara Lavallee, Adrienne Abdus-Salaam

How do we assess dance with consistency while honoring diverse bodies, styles, and pathways? This session unpacks a three-track state assessment model that values technique, movement acquisition, and creative expression. This workshop explores the development of the Georgia Dance Performance Assessment, modeled after Florida and aligned with Georgia college and university dance criteria. What should a state dance assessment truly measure? Participants will examine performance and creative tracks that balance technical rigor with inclusive, equitable assessment practices. We'll explore how inclusive classroom practices can coexist with equitable, standards-based evaluation. The session centers on maintaining technical expectations while allowing student voice and multiple modes of expression. This session introduces a Georgia-specific dance performance assessment grounded in higher-education criteria and K–12 realities that could easily be translated to other states. Participants will discuss how equitable assessment can support both technical development and artistic exploration.

Get a Grip: Learning from the Student Perspective

Denise Purvis, Matthew Henley

Dance students come to class with diverse backgrounds, dispositions, learning strategies, and goals. We assume that all students want to learn course content, but based on these characteristics, how they go about learning that content is very different. How then, can we become more open and aware of what students need? In this experiential workshop, presenters share research elucidating learning from the student perspective. Engaging the Skilled Intentionality Framework, as proposed by Rietveld, Denys, and van Westen (2018), we introduce participants to four learning "archetypes" uncovered in our recent research in a secondary dance classroom. We guide participants in embodied learning activities to clarify how students grapple with different elements of the learning environment-social, environmental, and emotional-in order to attain self-perceived success and "grip" content in the dance classroom. We discuss how considering student learning strategies highlighted in each archetype when creating and implementing assessments might encourage development of self-regulation and agency, thereby increasing content mastery. Workshop participants will explore ways in which this research might support and improve their own pedagogic practices.

Getting Your Werkz Up: Chicago Footwork Foundation

Charles Parks, Kelli Forman

This open level workshop, led by Chicago Footwork pioneer Charles "King Charles" Parks, introduces the foundational structure, history, and cultural context of Chicago Footwork and its deep roots in Chicago House music and dance. Designed for all levels, the session is taught progressively from slow to fast to ensure clarity, access, and technical precision. King Charles guides participants through the Puzzle Technique, a pedagogical framework he developed to break Chicago Footwork into clear, repeatable building blocks called Basic Elements. Dancers explore core elements such as twist, cross, toe, heel, directional shifts, rhythm patterns, pauses, and energy modulation, and examine how these components combine to form foundational steps including Erk n Jerk, Running Man, Mike n Ike, and Two Step. In Chicago, developing this foundation is known as getting your werkz up, meaning building control, rhythm, stamina, and clarity before advancing in variations. Music

moves intentionally from slower Chicago House grooves into faster Footwork battle tracks, allowing participants to experience the evolution of tempo, rhythm, and cultural environment. Alongside movement training, King Charles shares the historical lineage, community origins, and battle culture that shaped the form. Participants leave with foundational vocabulary, musical understanding, structural tools for teaching street dance foundations, and a culturally grounded approach that honors Chicago Footwork's roots while supporting inclusive learning environments.

Global Dance Immersion in Korea

Jin Hanley

This session offers a focused glimpse into a Global Dance Immersion in Korea led by the presenter, highlighting how immersive cultural exchange, performance, and embodied learning can create transformative, life-changing growth for students. During a ten-day experience, students from Palm Beach Atlantic University participated in the Asan International Ethnic Dance Festival, engaging with Korean traditional dance as well as a variety of world ethnic dance forms through workshops, performances, and cultural exchange. This broader exposure expanded students' understanding of dance as a global, living art form. While the immersion included diverse international experiences, this session centers specifically on Korean dance traditions and their evolution into contemporary forms, including K-pop. The session will share perspectives from both students and lead faculty, offering insight into how cross-cultural engagement, partnership, and performance-based learning shaped students' artistic development, global awareness, and sense of leadership. Students gained insight into history, identity, and community while developing empathy, curiosity, and leadership through experiential learning. Through the shared experiences of students and faculty, this session invites participants to engage firsthand in intercultural exploration. Movement is central to the session. Participants will take part in guided learning of sogo chum, a traditional Korean small drum dance, alongside K-pop choreography. Through embodied practice, attendees will experience how rhythm, coordination, musicality, and cultural context influence movement across generations. No prior experience is required, and all material will be provided for the attendees. The session balances active participation with reflection and discussion. Attendees will explore how traditional and contemporary Korean dance forms coexist, and how similar experiential approaches can be implemented within their own classrooms, studios, or programs. Conversation will focus on practical strategies for building partnerships, designing immersive learning opportunities, and expanding access to transformative, cross-cultural dance experiences for emerging artists and educators. Rather than presenting a comprehensive history of Korean or world dance, this session offers an experiential model for integrating cultural exchange and embodied inquiry into dance education. Participants will leave with concrete ideas, adaptable frameworks, and renewed inspiration for fostering globally engaged, transformative learning experiences for their students.

Grenadian Folklore: Dancing D' Shango n Bongo

Shola K. Roberts

This session offers participants the opportunity to connect with their roots, ancestors, and one another through the unique cultural blend of Shango and Bongo traditions. Through this

workshop, the rich cultural heritage of Grenada is shared as participants engage in a movement vocabulary rooted in polyrhythmic expression. Participants gain a deeper sense of cultural and kinesthetic awareness, appreciation, and an expanded vernacular to add to their movement practice, while developing a stronger understanding of musicality in relation to pre-recorded drum accompaniment. This workshop serves to awaken cultural identity through dances both local to Grenada and from the wider diaspora.

H

Healthy Dance Environments Through Collaboration

Donna Krasnow, Virginia Wilmerding, Elizabeth J. Kane,

This panel discussion will include a dance educator in the school system (secondary and university), a dance educator for professional training programs and companies and a medical practitioner who works with dancers. The focus of the panel is how the collaboration of these three professionals can enhance teaching practices to improve the health and well-being of dancers. Our concern is that the approach to dancers in these three environments is at times in conflict and can present different goals and objectives for the dancers. The three of us have been in discussions and collaboration to find a unified path to addressing dance training, optimizing the dancers' health, and developing and assisting in navigating through some of these conflicting issues. The discussion includes dance psychology, coping mechanisms, nutrition, rest, injury care and prevention, biomechanics, motor learning, and community. The inclusion of conditioning, somatic practice, and educational workshops is becoming more common in a variety of dance settings and serves to expand the dancers' training. Special attention will be paid to inclusion of dancers with diverse abilities, and methods to create a more inclusive and positive environment will be addressed. Attendees will be presented with information from practice and research that can be applied directly to their teaching.

Higher Education Community Meet-Up

Elizabeth McPherson

In this session, participants will first brainstorm topics pertaining to Dance in Higher Education that they would like to discuss in smaller groups. We will then breakout into these small groups, discuss, and lastly share back to the full group. This session is an opportunity to share concerns, triumphs, and challenges and to support each other in finding possible solutions where applicable.

Hip Hop Dance: A Therapy Session?

Maria Daniel

We are changing the landscape of Hip Hop Dance, Mental Health and Healing through Hip Hop Dance: A Therapy Session. We use Hip Hop Dance to explore mental health, addiction, disabilities and healing. Our groundbreaking research will be published in the Journal of Hip Hop studies this summer. The workshop experience directly aligns with "Uniting to Progress the Field of Dance Education" by demonstrating the transformative power of Hip Hop Dance in promoting multidimensional well-being in educational settings. Through guided movement and proven research, we provide inclusive educational spaces that (1) promote healing, (2) advance pedagogy and (3) unite the field of dance education. Participants will experience how Hip Hop's cultural traditions

and dynamic self-expression foster empathy, healing and create community connections.

Holistic Dance Education through Collective Effort

Kyla Olson, Melissa Brading, Ali Duffy

Dance faculty from Texas Tech University discuss their collective approach to training dance students in a holistic manner. From embracing unique skills and perspectives of each faculty member to engaging with different entities and resources on and off campus, the program works to coalesce various communities for a holistic student experience. In a world that is ever changing and evolving, we discuss the positive changes we have recently seen in our student population with these concerted efforts while grappling with the challenges of student engagement post-pandemic, political issues impacting the classroom, and overall decline in student enrollment. The panel will discuss specific examples of how resources are synergized to benefit student learning and success. Considerations such as resource allocation, knowledge and experience of stakeholders, university and community policies, curricular alignment and accreditation concerns, and funding are also discussed as influencing these collaborations and overlap of various educational components contributing to students' experience while in our program. We also invite discussion and hope to hear from others on successes in their own dance communities and programs.

Honoring Excellence, Sharing Wisdom

Yauri S. Dalencour

Join Awards Committee Chair Yauri Dalencour and the 2026 National Awards recipients for a panel discussion examining how synergy—the interaction of individuals, programs, and communities to create impact greater than the sum of their separate efforts—can energize dance programs and teaching methods for longevity and success. Moderated by Yauri, this conversation centers on the gathered wisdom of national award recipients whose careers reflect collaborative leadership and meaningful field-wide impact. Panelists will share insights from building and sustaining successful dance programs, reflecting on their career paths, essential skills, and how cooperative engagement across sectors strengthens both individual practice and the broader dance community. The session will conclude with dedicated time for Q&A and dialogue, inviting participants into the exchange.

Hypermobility: its impact on balance and learning

Allegra Romita

What is hypermobility? Hypermobility is often confused with flexibility and dancers may describe it as hyperextended knees, double jointed elbows or fingers, or loose ankles. This session will explore hypermobility and its impact how a student learns and executes movement. By understanding how our students with hypermobility process movement, it will enable educators to cultivate more inclusive spaces for all of our students. The session will provide creative solutions to improve stability and resilience in action through Functional Awareness® (FA). FA® is a somatic practice that integrates functional anatomy and motor learning to develop student-centered pedagogical strategies for all students to thrive. The presenters will define hypermobility syndrome, describe what it entails, and discuss how understanding it supports movement potential in our students. Participants will learn and practice a series of specific verbal, auditory, visual, tactile, and proprioceptive strategies to broaden the pathways for success for all

movement learners – especially our students with hypermobility.

I Can Teach Anything: Digging into the Concepts

DeAngelo Blanchard

Dance teachers are often asked to teach a wide range of styles and genres, many of which may fall outside their own training or expertise. This workshop reframes that challenge by shifting the focus from technique to the universal concepts and transferable skills that underlie all dance styles. Participants will engage in movement explorations and collaborative tasks that demonstrate how concept-based frameworks can open pathways to teaching any style while honoring cultural integrity. By giving students ownership to investigate and contribute cultural and stylistic knowledge, teachers can create inclusive, inquiry-driven classrooms that expand beyond their own limitations. This session equips educators with adaptable strategies to foster creativity, representation, and deeper engagement with diverse dance practices.

Improvisation in Dance Pedagogy

Deepa Mahadevan

I am a Bharatanatyam practitioner born and brought up in India where I learnt and practiced this dance form for over 20 years before moving to the United States where I get to teach, perform and choreograph to immigrant student dancers. In December 2024 I presented my solo production, 'Mayyal' in Chennai, India. This paper is a critical auto-ethnographic reflection of how the "failure" to present a pre-rehearsed script became a fertile ground for experiencing radical creative agency. 'Mayyal' was performed with a live orchestra comprising of a conductor, percussionist, violinist, flautist and a vocalist. Typically most solo Bharatanatyam performances is structured around a shared melodic and rhythmic script between the musicians and the dancer/performer. While there are some improvisational elements that are germane to any Bharatanatyam performance and that it is not typical to pre rehearse every small detail, largely 80% of the performance adheres to a pre-rehearsed script of cues. However, during 'Mayyal' within the first five minutes of the performance I was able to sense that a series of missed cues by the musicians was making it not viable to proceed with the pre-rehearsed performance score. With just two rehearsals with the orchestra and with the series of missed cues right at the outset there was palpable tension among the orchestra members who were working with each other in real time on how to bring the performance back on course. As for me I was performing in front of an 150-member audience while assimilating this situation. This paper is about my state of mind and the creative liberation that I felt at that moment and that lasted through the whole solo performance of an hour and 20 minutes. Through this exploration I want to understand if dance is a learnt skill or a visceral reality that I translated through the medium of Bharatanatyam. The series of missed cues liberated me from the safety of the rehearsals and demanded me to extract art and performance from a place in my being. Through the performance I was curious to see what my being will present to me next. I was reaching out to my somatic intelligence and embodied knowledge that 40 years of dancing had coded into me. This spontaneous

exploration reconfigured the performer-audience-musician dynamic. As a teacher, I also always wonder if this energy and emotion that I feel is something that can be extracted and taught as a skill to my students. Is this mental state to regard every missed cue as an opportunity for creative liberation a transferable mindset or skill? Can I deconstruct the path that my mind worked in those moments when I navigated the liminal space between structure and chaos yet produced an experience that exemplified aesthetic integrity? There were several audience members who were moved by the performance and were clueless about the missed cues or my response to it. To me what moved them was that they experienced something authentic that I felt and shared. This paper thus explores the space between "showing" and "being" the dance. I believe that my personal exploration as the principal dancer-creator and performance studies researcher will be an important tool for creative analysis for the field.

In Step: Educator and Administrator Communication

Josey Pickett

This session will address the communication divide between dance educators and campus administrators, who often do not have a background in the fine arts and specifically, dance. During this workshop session, participants will be introduced to examples of Tier I, II, and II instruction in the context of dance and be provided with the language to describe high quality dance instruction to persons unfamiliar with dance terminology and classroom practices. Participants will be provided with language and infographics they can present to their administrators/supervisors to better advocate for themselves and the needs of their students. Throughout this session, participants will be given the opportunity to share their own experiences and examples of high quality dance instruction and effective communication tools.

Interbeing: Body Listening through CI and Butoh

Eilish Henderson

With a deep, visceral need for connection, many turn to contact improvisation as an open space for collective movement, kinesthetic listening, and community. Developed by Steve Paxton and Nancy Stark Smith in the early 70s, contact improvisation (CI) has resonated with people globally. While the innovators highlighted movement research and acrobatics, pushing boundaries with weight sharing and challenged gender norms within contact improvisation- local CI groups have engaged critiques of the practice as we evolve understandings of power dynamics in dance spaces- a crucial inquiry for CI practitioners. There are CI approaches prioritizing a somatically engaged, listening-oriented CI practice and ones that champion a CI "technique", momentum, and weight sharing. Depending on where one experiences CI, experiences can be vastly different based on the local CI community and their goals. For the past year, I've been investigating a sensitive, eco-somatic, butoh-based approach to contact improvisation. Through this lens, poetic imagery inspired by "butoh-fu" or butoh scripts (originated by one of the founders of butoh, Tatsumi Hijikata) informs a solo practice and meditation before a collective practice opens. My pedagogy of CI and Butoh (currently entitled "Interbeing") is also grounded in the notion of making what may be implicit, explicit. Clearly stated visions and intentions for the space and practice are prioritized in tandem with clearly stated boundaries and desires. This session will be

oriented towards these deep listening aspects of CI- utilizing a butoh framework. It will reflect the containers I've held of both CI and butoh practitioners for the past year. The modalities for entering into deep listening and delving into subconscious movements are informed by butoh, slowness, and somatic exercises favoring a gentle and collaborative CI exploration that is compelled by nurturing a collective voice, allowing for emergence between dancers.

Intersecting a Festival with Latiné Tiny Dances
Cristina Marte
Community, intersections, collaboration, and the arts are themes that ,when fused together, create opportunities for impactful arts experiences that affect cherished and new audiences. In New Brunswick, New Jersey, a unique arts festival called "Heartbeat of the City" is being shaped by coLAB Arts to create new economic and cultural connections between the small city's professional and financial Downtown community and the Latiné-majority Esperanza Neighborhood. The festival has presented an opportunity to maximize collaborations between intersecting communities using a dance format that is accessible to any age and ability resulting in live dance in the streets. In this session, participants will be taken through the preparation to implementation phases learning about the collaboration between a local arts organization, a university dance program, and local community organizations to infuse dance into the festival; the integration of college dance students creating dances for the Latiné Tiny Dance Collection using the framework of pláticas y testimonios; a live performance during the festival; and community involvement in creating their own tiny dances. A short movement experience will allow participants to experience the process of creating their own tiny dance.

Into Sunlight: A Choreographic Expression of Hope
Ann Biddle, Randa Broughton, Robin Becker
This experiential, movement-based workshop introduces participants to Into Sunlight: A Choreographic Expression of Hope, an interdisciplinary dance curriculum authored by Ann Biddle on behalf of the Robin Becker Dance Company. Designed for middle and high school learners, the workshop includes excerpts from the accompanying documentary film and the Into Sunlight dance, followed by guided movement explorations and collaborative choreographic tasks drawn directly from the curriculum. Activities model age-appropriate lesson plans that integrate dance-making, historical inquiry, and reflective dialogue. The curriculum features a seven-lesson middle school dance unit, multiple project-based learning options for high school students, and curated resources focused on the Vietnam War and the anti-war student protest movement of the 1960s. Participants will receive a digital download of the curriculum and Vimeo links to both the documentary film and the dance work.

Intro to HBCU Dance: A K-12 Lesson Planning Guide
Veneshia Stribling
Are your students captivated by the "Majorette" dance style, but you're unsure how to teach it effectively? This standards-aligned session will provide dance educators with a foundational understanding of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) dance traditions, with a focus on the widely recognized "Majorette"

style. Participants will explore culturally responsive lesson planning strategies that connect this dynamic style to broader dance education frameworks. Attendees will leave with ready-to-use teaching resources, including slide presentations, lesson ideas, and strategies for introducing students to HBCU dance team opportunities. Whether you're looking to expand your curriculum or foster a deeper appreciation for dance diversity, this session will equip you with the tools to do so confidently.

Investigating Sexualization in Competitive Dance

Natalie Tacuri

In a world of glitz, glamour, and glitter, young competitive dancers are immersed in a culture in which performances of sexualization are becoming increasingly pervasive. Dance teachers and choreographers are under immense pressure to create and reproduce routines that are considered "trendy," despite debates surrounding age appropriateness in competitive dance across Canada and the United States. In the dance world, the distinction between cute and sexy is ambiguous and is complicated by pedagogical practices and the reinforcement of gender norms by dance parents, teachers, choreographers, judges, and other professionals in the competitive dance industry. Research suggests this has significant ramifications for young dancers, as they learn to define themselves by historically and culturally situated standards of competitive dance culture that celebrates objectified presentations of their bodies. Thus, the ways in which dancers may perceive their value and desirability is deeply entangled within unattainable standards of beauty, femininity, and (hetero)sexuality targeted specifically towards young, white girls in Westernized contexts. In this presentation, I will present the results from my PhD dissertation, which takes a feminist ethnographic approach to examine the sexualization of girl dancers in Canada. I conducted interviews with competitive dancers, dance parents, and judges, alongside field observations at a competitive dance studio located in Montréal, Québec, Canada. The data analyses resulted in the construction of four themes: (1) Competitive Dance Culture, (2) Sexualization in Practice, (3) The Normalization of Sexualization, (4) Ambiguity and Blurred Boundaries, (5) Navigating Freedom Versus Protection. Collectively, these themes illustrate how sexualization operates as both normalized and contested, shaping the lived experiences of girl dancers in contradictory ways. This research offers dance education scholars and key stakeholders in the competitive dance industry with evidence-based recommendations and strategies for thinking about and implementing "age-appropriate" approaches to dance education. The findings highlight how societal and industry pressures sustain problematic practices in competitive dance, pointing to urgent needs for policy change, curriculum reform, and the re-thinking of structural conditions. Most importantly, this research introduces a perspective that prioritizes dancer agency, choice, and autonomy – postfeminist concepts that are rarely put into practice in current training and pedagogy. In prioritizing these concepts, this research provides a framework for creating competitive dance environments in which young dancers can thrive artistically, physically, and emotionally.

J

Jazz Restored: Exploring Impact and Identity

Charlotte Bariteau, Carlos R. A. Jones, Reign Capers

How has rooted jazz dance education shaped the experiences and perspectives of emerging educators and students? How can we leverage the power of jazz dance history to empower and affirm students' identities? Through a panel discussion, we will convene a cross-generational dialogue featuring both student and professional voices to share the personal experiences of how teaching jazz dance from a rooted perspective can be challenging, life-changing, and ultimately affirming for both student and educator identity. Building on influential texts including Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches and Rooted Jazz Dance, this session will examine how rooted jazz dance education and increased commitment to jazz dance history have personally impacted the student-educator experience. This session will draw specific attention to the emerging generation of dance educators and how their perspectives and identities within jazz dance have been shaped by a greater commitment to teaching rooted jazz dance and jazz dance history over the past twenty years. Through an open-dialogue format, panelists will share firsthand stories about how their backgrounds, identities, and lived experiences inform their teaching and learning. Together, they will address questions such as: How can we address challenges in classroom learning about jazz history, and how can we approach jazz technique in a new way? How did learning about jazz history change or challenge your perspectives on jazz dance? How does learning about rooted jazz dance affirm diverse students and their culture? How can the teaching of rooted jazz present as a freedom and historical honoring of the past while intersecting with aspects of the commercial dance future? What has to be unlearned to move jazz dance knowledge forward? In what ways have jazz dance and knowledge in its history impacted your own identity? Attendees will leave the session with a clear understanding of the importance of teaching jazz dance from a rooted perspective, recognizing its role in both supporting historical awareness and fostering empowered personal identities among students. Key takeaways will include practical teaching and learning strategies shared by panelists, adaptable for diverse educational settings. Participants will receive discussion questions and curated resources to facilitate students' authentic and productive engagement with jazz dance history in their own settings. Ultimately, attendees will be equipped with tools to integrate rooted jazz dance pedagogy into their practice, enhancing both educational outcomes and student identity formation.

K

K-12 Meet Up

Abigail Agresta-Stratton, Rebecca McGregor

Please join fellow K-12 dance educators to share strategies and stories so that we may connect and build community.

K-12 Panel From Resistant to Ready

Abigail Agresta-Stratton, Tanjarae Porter, Rebecca McGregor, Kaoru Ikeda

What do you do to encourage participation from all dancers? How do you help your dancers gain the confidence necessary to participate? How do you gain the trust of the reluctant students? Dance educators will share strategies they have used successfully to help each

student become invested in the dance classroom. Build your toolkit for increased classroom participation, confidence, and stronger relationships with students, regardless of their interests or ability levels.

Kaleidoscope: Music, Dance, and Community
Michal Hershkoviz Michaeli
This session focuses on the Kaleidoscope program - an ongoing artistic-educational framework embedded within programs for dance and music education students at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. The program brings these students into shared pedagogical practice with diverse community groups, using collaborative creation and movement-based inquiry as a common language. The Kaleidoscope model emerged from exposure to interdisciplinary, community-based work during a professional study visit in the United States and was later developed into a distinct, practice-based program within teacher education. Over four years, the program has evolved through sustained work with diverse communities and ongoing reflection. Designed as an experiential workshop, this session invites participants to actively engage with the Kaleidoscope model. Participants will be introduced to the structure and guiding principles of the model and will then experience how music and dance can be connected through embodied exploration, dialogue, and collaborative learning. During the session, participants will engage in selected foundational practices from the program that function as anchors for movement research and content development. Working in small groups according to areas of interest, participants will discuss and conduct movement-based inquiry to adapt existing materials or develop new content in response to the characteristics and needs of specific communities. Participants will leave the session with a clear, applicable model for interdisciplinary teaching that connects music and dance, or for dance teaching informed by music. While the program is situated within higher education, the model can be implemented in other educational contexts as well. A short video introducing the Kaleidoscope program and illustrating its community-based work is available here: https://vimeo.com/1163740229?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

L

Leadership Community Meet-Up
Yoav Kaddar
This Leadership Community meeting welcomes members interested in the field of Leadership within education field. All aspiring and seasoned leaders are welcome to join this meeting in which a variety of current and future leadership topics will be discussed and shared by those in attendance.

Legacy: Embodied Journeys Between Africa
Eto'o Tsana
In the Kongolese tradition, knowledge does not sit on a page. It lives in the body, travels through rhythm, and is passed from one generation to the next through the act of moving together. This session asks attendees to step into that tradition firsthand. The session opens with a fifteen-minute presentation by Eto'o Tsana, a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University, whose dissertation examines how Black and LatinX women teaching African and Afro-diasporic dance forms forge cultural (re)connection to historically disrupted lineages. Eto'o will share the scholarly frameworks informing her research, including Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, Critical

Dialectical Pluralism in dance education, and Endarkened Feminist Epistemology, and discuss how the Kongo Cosmogram's circular epistemology offers a different model for how teaching and learning can be structured. Then the talking stops and the drums begin. Attendees will participate in a traditional Congolese dance class that integrates chant, oral history, and movement as a single, inseparable practice. The class is built on call-and-response: voices first, then feet, then the full body engaged in rhythms that carry centuries of cultural memory. As each movement is taught, its history travels with it. You will not just learn a step; you will learn what it carries, who danced it before you, and why it endures. The circular and communal structure of the class reflects how knowledge is organized in Kongolese tradition: not passed down from a single authority at the front of the room, but generated collectively, through shared breath and shared rhythm. No prior dance experience is necessary. All levels are welcome. Come ready to move. What makes this session distinct is that the pedagogy is the content. Rather than presenting strategies for culturally sustaining teaching and hoping attendees translate them later, this class enacts those strategies in real time. Attendees will feel the difference between a learning environment organized around collective participation and one built on observation and replication, and experience how embedding cultural narrative into movement instruction transforms technique from isolated skill into living tradition. You will leave this room understanding something in your body that no reading list can teach you. This session speaks to dance educators across K–12, higher education, and community settings, as well as classroom teachers and arts administrators interested in how embodied practice can advance conversations about equity and whose knowledge we value in our studios and schools. Comfortable clothing and barefoot or soft-soled shoes recommended.

Let's Tap! - Building Adult Communities
Thelma Goldberg
Adult dancers are a growing population in studios worldwide. They not only bring important revenue but also tremendous joy and enthusiasm. Thelma will take participants through a typical adult tap class (Beginner+) that focuses on connecting with oneself, others, the traditions of tap, and with the music. She will share how she grew her program to 100 weekly dancers across five levels and address issues specific to adult learners. Topics to be addressed include: How to get them in the door and how to keep them coming; How to prepare them for performances; How to engage each participant in brain-activated activities that support physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being; How to find JOY in sharing rhythm. The class will be mostly dancing but Thelma will also share video footage and materials. Participants of all ages and tap levels are welcome, and no tap shoes are required.

Letting the Body Speak in the Reggio Way
Kaoru Ikeda
In U.S. early childhood education, the Reggio Emilia Approach (REA)—originating in post–World War II Italy—has gained broad recognition, especially after a major news magazine named it one of the world's "best preschool approaches" in the 1990s. Still, many educators wonder what the REA truly is and how to meaningfully integrate it into arts-based learning such as creative movement. I was one of those wandering educators. In 2024, my experience in the International Teacher Study Group in Reggio Emilia, Italy, deepened these questions and sparked an ongoing exploration

of how, as a dance educator/teaching artist, I can apply this art-integrated, holistic philosophy to all types of learners. This session introduces the core ideas of the REA and connects them to my work as a movement specialist at a REA-inspired school in New York City. I also reflect on my continuing effort to adapt this culturally responsive, Italian-born approach to New York City's unique social and cultural context. I will also share movement-class examples that embody REA-inspired values such as emergent curriculum, and describe how I collaborate with faculty from different disciplines to support children's learning process. Together, we will consider how creative dance and movement can serve as a meeting point among these approaches, highlighting shared commitments to creativity, collaboration, and holistic development. Participants will leave with a clear overview of the REA and practical strategies for aligning creative movement programs with Reggio principles through collaborative, creative practice. This session is designed for dance educators and teaching artists working with pre-K children who are curious about the REA and how to incorporate creative movement into their curriculum. I will also share how my trip to Italy informed a co-designed unit and lesson plan, developed with other specialists at my school, that centers arts integration as a core expression of REA-inspired practice and brings the wider school community together.

LGBTQIA+ Affinity Group Meeting

Cami Holman, Bradford Chin

This affinity group session will create space for LGBTQIA+ educators from all sectors to meet and form community. We connect via an ice breaker, discuss resources and concerns to address our needs and those of our students, and find joy through moving together.

Los Viejitos: Stories in Motion

Gabriela Cerda Mendoza, Anna Castillo

This session explores Los Viejitos as a living example of synergy—where culture, voice, and storytelling come together to create a shared artistic experience. Participants will engage with movement inspired by traditional Mexican folk dance, improvisation, and creative exploration with a cane to understand how dance embodies cultural memory and community connection. Through collaborative exercises, participants will examine how movement, narrative, and musicality intersect to foster dialogue, inclusion, and co-creation in diverse dance spaces. The session highlights strategies for adapting traditional forms to classroom and community contexts while honoring cultural integrity and amplifying student voice. Attendees will leave with practical tools for integrating storytelling and cultural expression into choreography, classroom practice, and collaborative performances, and experience firsthand the energy and creativity that emerges when dancers, educators, and communities unite in shared movement.

Love Move Play™ - Luna's ECE Framework

Nancy Ng

Love Move Play™, Luna Dance & Creativity's developmental framework for dance in early childhood education, honors the whole child as they discover and investigate their world through relationships and community, curiosity, and exploring through the moving body. This framework is informed by attachment theory, the basic neurocellular patterns, and the elements of dance. Participants will experience a creative dance lesson which synthesizes these concepts as they relate to the learning theories of constructivism, culturally responsive teaching, and creativity "flow theory". Following the lesson there will be an opportunity for

questions and discussion. This session is a taste of Luna's six-week virtual course, "Love Move Play™: Dance in Early Childhood". If you are an educator who wishes to deepen their understanding of the interconnection between child development and dance, this workshop will support you to use children's natural propensity to create, explore, and learn through the moving body.

M

Making Sense Together: Creative Group Learning

Matthew Henley, Miriam Giguere

While facilitating creative group processes, such as the development of collaborative choreography, we observed that the students' processes and products were often unexpected, unique, and dependent on the synergy of the group - that what students learned depended on who they were learning with. Though there are a number of theories that provide an explanation for aspects of these observations - i.e., group cognition, embodied cognition, participatory sensemaking, Kolb's learning theory - each one taken individually does not fully account for our observations. In this workshop, therefore, we bring these theories together. We begin by outlining dynamic systems research in cognitive science. Next, we provide an overview of the embodied cognition framework of participatory sensemaking. These frameworks are explicitly about cognition and only implicitly about learning. We, therefore, bring these two frameworks explicitly into the learning sciences by combining them with Kolb's theory of learning cycles. To explore the integration of these frameworks in real world practice, we will then invite participants to take on the roles of researcher and dancemaker during the creation of a short collaborative choreography. This will be followed by a reflection on the opportunities and challenges of this framework, what it might reveal about learning in dance as a collective, rather than individual endeavor, and the implications for lesson planning and assessment. Participants will leave the session with a framework for further exploring how learning occurs during complex creative group processes in their own classroom as well as ideas for community-centered class activities.

Men In Dance Screening of "When Men Dance"

Barry Blumenfeld, Andrew Janetti, Yoav Kaddar

Men in Dance group of NDEO will be screening the film "When Men Dance" which follows a group of men from around the globe as they follow the rhythms of their African, Latin, and European roots as they pursue the same dream: to dance professionally and live authentically, defying society's expectations every step of the way. "When Men Dance" invites audiences into the intimate worlds of a diverse group of young male dancers bound by their passion for movement and self-expression. Behind the artistry lies a complex reality: battles with racism, loneliness, financial strain, and a rising tide of anti-LGBTQ and anti-immigrant sentiment. Straight, gay, and non-binary alike, these dancers reveal the scars they carry—and the courage that keeps them moving. As they prepare for their next performances, each leap and turn becomes an act of defiance, a declaration of identity, and a fight for the right to exist as they are. The screening will be followed by a talkback session with the producers of the film. Website: https://www.whenmendance.com/

Mental Health Strategies for Students

Bradford Chin, Christie Bondade, Julie H. Lucia
This session will share resources and strategies for how students can care for their mental/holistic well-being through the unique stressors of an undergraduate or graduate program in dance. This survey of resources will include some individual and group activity work and will cover a variety of contexts such as creating and enforcing boundaries, seeking mentorship, different approaches to meditation, and leveraging institutional resources for various aspects of your holistic health.

Movement as Language Across Communities
Johari Mayfield
How can dance educators design meaningful cross-community learning experiences when geography, infrastructure, and access are unequal-but curiosity and creativity are shared? This 70-minute interactive session invites dance educators into a participatory design lab centered on a real partnership-in-progress between a K–7 school in Uganda and a school in New York City. Rather than positioning global exchange as charity or spectacle, the session reframes cross-community learning as shared labor-using dance as a nonverbal, culturally responsive language to explore social studies concepts across distance, difference, and constraint. Participants will collaboratively design a 45-minute cross-community social studies lesson that integrates dance to examine themes such as community, daily life, work, and place. Working in small groups, educators will account for real-world conditions including limited electricity, asynchronous communication, time-zone differences, and the developmental needs of upper-elementary and middle-grade learners. By treating constraint as a creative partner rather than a deficit, the session offers adaptable frameworks for designing resilient, human-centered social studies learning experiences. Educators will leave with concrete strategies for using movement to support communication, perspective-taking, and co-learning across communities—strategies that can be applied locally or internationally, wherever access and opportunity are uneven but imagination is shared.

Moving Toward Belonging: An Embodied Storytelling
Rebecca Visintainer
In large dance classes, students often default to familiar peer groups, creating instructional challenges around collaboration, risk-taking, and collective learning. This session examines a pedagogical approach developed in a New Jersey public high school dance classroom that intentionally addressed these dynamics through structured, student-centered learning design. Grounded in Narrative 4's Story Exchange Framework, the curriculum positioned legacy as a generative concept through which students examined personal values, influences, and lived experiences. Using a clear vision statement and scaffolded prompts, the teacher guided students through sequenced movement exploration, deep listening protocols, questioning strategies, and collaborative composition tasks. This session emphasizes how intentional pedagogical choices, such as structured story exchanges, reflective questioning, and embodied explorations, supported students in moving beyond social silos while maintaining emotional safety and agency. The work culminated in a collaboratively created dance that functioned as both an artistic product and a pedagogical assessment of shared understanding. Participants will leave with concrete teaching strategies, adaptable lesson structures, and facilitation tools for cultivating belonging, engagement, and

community through embodied learning in secondary dance and arts classrooms.

Music Education for Dancers: A Workshop
Michael Remson
What does it mean when we say a dancer is "musical"? Can we teach dancers to be more "musical"? As teachers, we are looking for ways to teach our students to be more musical and to connect them more authentically with the music they are dancing to. Yet, we struggle ourselves to find the language and the tools to help them do this. This hands-on workshop introduces participants to Music Education for Dancers, a program that defines the elements of music and helps students identify them, understand when they are dancing to them, and how to begin to make decisions as dancers with that knowledge. Designed as a "long game" tool for dance programs, Music Education for Dancers uses choreography and creativity to help teachers and students use the elements of music as learning tools. This workshop will use modules from the program to demonstrate how teachers can use the program at home and will include video featuring students using the tools in actual classroom settings. Participants will leave with at least a few tools they can use to teach musical elements and an approach for teaching music in the dance classroom that yields results.

N

Name It to Train It: Anatomical Language in Dance
Nina Pongratz
Name It to Train It: Anatomical Language in Dance explores how using clear, anatomically accurate language can transform dance instruction for dancers of all ages by improving movement efficiency, reducing injury risk, and increasing student understanding and autonomy. Grounded in basic anatomy and dance science, the session introduces essential concepts related to bones, joints, muscles, tendons, and ligaments, and examines how these structures influence alignment, mobility, and stability. Participants will explore why certain movements feel effortless while others create strain, and how inefficient movement patterns can lead to poor technique and injury over time. Through guided movement experiences, attendees will identify body landmarks, compare alignment practices, and experiment with anatomically specific cueing strategies that replace generalized language. The session also addresses how anatomical awareness supports inclusive and equitable teaching practices. By normalizing structural differences between bodies and helping students distinguish between fatigue, soreness, and harmful pain, educators can create safer learning environments where dancers feel empowered to listen to and advocate for their bodies. Attention is also given to nervous system regulation and learning readiness, offering practical strategies to support focus, retention, and emotional safety in the classroom. Participants will leave with concrete tools they can immediately apply in their studios or classrooms, including a repeatable cueing framework, injury-prevention guidelines, and strategies for integrating anatomical language seamlessly into daily technique classes.

Navigating Graduate Dance Program Applications
Bradford Chin, Reign Capers
This moderated panel of graduate program faculty members and current/recently

graduated graduate students will shed light on the different components of researching, applying to, and selecting a graduate program. This session is designed for attendees who are considering applying to a graduate program in dance.

Navigating the Academic Job Market
Bradford Chin
This moderated panel of faculty members who have recently participated in the academic job market process will shed light on the various aspects of the academic job market, including the different types of positions and institutions, application components, the interview process, and job offer negotiations. This session is designed for attendees who are currently on or preparing to enter the academic job market.

NDEO 101: Conference Orientation
Ray Schwartz, Julie Pentz
Grounded in this year's theme of Synergy, we invite you to begin your conference experience in connection and community. Join NDEO Board members for an engaging orientation designed to help you navigate the conference with clarity and confidence, make the most of your time, and highlight key aspects you won't want to miss. First-time attendees are especially encouraged to attend—this is your opportunity to start building relationships and momentum from the very first day.

NDEO SIG: Dance Teacher Training
Betsy Maloney Leaf
NDEO's Dance Teacher Training SIG provides support to individuals and institutions involved in preparing credentialed dance educators for a career in K-12 schools. It is open to anyone interested in preparing future dance educators for schools, including dance teacher trainers in higher education, current in-service dance teachers who serve as mentors or peer coaches, community organizations looking to collaborate on the preparation of future dance educators, students currently pursuing a dance education credential, policymakers connected to state education agencies, and anyone curious about preparing credentialed K-12 dance educators. The SIG meets throughout the year to address topics related to the preparation of future dance teachers. Topics include how to recruit and retain credential dance teachers for K-12 schools, how to comply with state regulations (such as teaching standards), and how to develop a support pre-service teachers during school field placements. Join the SIG at this year's conference to make connections with other teacher trainers across the country and to discuss relevant topics facing the field of dance teacher training.

Neurological Synergy: Our Interconnected Brain
Rima Faber, Sandra L. Minton
Brain images light up almost the entire brain when we dance. Synergy coordinates every aspect of our neurological system as we simultaneously coordinate our physical, conceptual, and emotional worlds. This session will explain how this occurs and provide opportunity for participants to experience its happening. The first activity in the workshop session will be an informational PowerPoint presentation depicting the brain and how its various areas interact in coordinated synergy as we accomplish a variety of aspects we engage in when dancing: 1) improvising, 2) choreographing, 3) learning dance, or 4) performing a learned dance. Each activity will be explored with individual movement (10 minutes). In dance, the mind and whole body focus on an idea. The brain integrates: 1) sensate information of sight, sound, touch, spatial direction, and proprioceptive awareness;

2) memories that must be available and accurate, 3) emotions that are often depicted and felt, 4) metaphors and movement symbols to communicate and interpret, and 5) bodily physical feats that must be simultaneously accomplished in a great many areas of the body. All of these aspects occur and integrate simultaneously. They, thus, require total neurological synergy within the self and in relation to the external world. These aspects will also be experientially realized (10 minutes). Participants will then divide into break-out groups. Each group will decide on a dance activity to analyze as it is accomplished. They will be provided with handouts depicting the areas of the brain and, as a group, they can chart which neurological areas are activated and for what purpose. Individual dancers will choose which brain area they wish to enact as they coordinate together to accomplish their chosen task. In this way they can begin to both experience and recognize the complexity of synergy that occurs as we dance (20 minutes). Teaching Application: Each group will discuss how this information can help them instruct their students. How can it help to teach movement more effectively? How can they each a variety of different learners? How can wide reaching cultural synergy be attained? (10 minutes). Sharing: Groups will demonstrate their task as they verbally announce which parts of the brain are connecting to accomplish it, and report on one ideas discussed to use the information to teach effectively. (10 minutes) The session will conclude with a Q and A, and participant remarks about any new realizations (10 minutes).

No Shoes Required: Tap Dance For Everyone
Rebecca Rabideau
Intended for all dance instructors, this workshop will explore methods of integrating core tap dance concepts into any curriculum- no shoes or special floor required! As humans we experience the primal appeal of rhythm. Simple or complex, percussive dance has the ability to bring together groups from disparate communities, united in an exploration of music and movement. Tap is often underrepresented in dance education. The lack of tap shoes or a proper tap dance floor can be a barrier to incorporating tap dance into our classes. Teaching students of various experience levels and physical/developmental abilities can also be an impediment to implementing a tap dance curriculum. Drawing on the presenter's many experiences working with diverse students in a range of educational settings, this presentation will give you practical ideas for exercises, progressions and creative play to bring back to your classroom. Many activities focus on the rhythms and sounds created through body percussion instead of simply the sounds of the taps, bypassing the need for specific shoes or flooring. Also discussed will be methods of leveling classroom activities to suit the needs of the people in the room and meet them where they are. The goal is for you to leave with clear teaching methodologies, supporting materials and assessment rubrics for seamless integration into your classroom- and of course, inspiration to try something new that will benefit your students and enliven your curriculum!

O

Outside Studio Walls: Service-Inspired Teaching
Elizabeth Borromeo
How can we serve our local communities and truly expand access to dance education? We need to step out of the classroom or studio and jump into our wider community with both feet!

In our session, we'll explore how to make new connections and bring meaningful dance experiences to the underserved populations around us. I'm excited to share a sample lesson plan as well as varied "movement moments" that have been consistently well-received across my years teaching and sharing dance in residential addiction recovery programs, public libraries, elder care/retirement communities and church-sponsored organizations in my local area. I will share tools, tips, discoveries, joys, caveats and challenges that have been a part of my community and service-based teaching journey while we move through the workshop session. Welcoming our often-overlooked neighbors into dance via these creative partnerships has impacted my teaching in studio and school programs in profound and positive ways, and I've witnessed significant benefits for my community dance students. My goal is for educators who attend this session to be inspired to venture outside their studios and classrooms and seek out the folks who have missed out on the chance to find their voices, tell their stories, move their bodies and connect with each other through dance.

P

Parallel Pathways: Flamenco and Contemporary Dance

Marisol Encinias, Eva Encinias, Amanda Hamp

This panel examines how a public research university built and sustained a full four-year Bachelor of Arts degree pathway in a historically underrepresented dance form through the creation of parallel degree concentrations. At the University of New Mexico (UNM), flamenco and contemporary dance function as equal concentrations within the BA in Dance, sharing parallel requirements in technique, history, choreography, performance, pedagogy, and writing. This structure positions flamenco not as an elective or supplemental offering, but as a complete field of study embedded within the academic infrastructure of the program. Panelists representing program leadership, institutional equity administration, and program development will discuss both the successes and the ongoing challenges of this model. While the parallel concentration structure has enabled curricular parity, institutional legitimacy, and sustained student engagement, the non-dominant form has, at times, been required to adapt to academic frameworks originally designed for contemporary dance. The panel examines how these adaptations have been navigated, where they have been productive, and where they continue to raise questions related to authenticity, pedagogy, assessment, and artistic integrity. Rather than presenting the model as fixed or complete, the session foregrounds process, revision, and continual refinement. Panelists will share how the flamenco concentration has evolved over time, the compromises and negotiations required within existing institutional systems, and the strategies used to strengthen the concentration while continuing to work toward deeper alignment with the form’s cultural and pedagogical realities. The undergraduate model is further supported by graduate pathways, including an MA in Dance History and Criticism and an MFA in Dance, where students may pursue scholarly and creative work in flamenco, contemporary dance, and related forms. These programs reinforce continuity across degree levels and demonstrate long-term institutional commitment. While grounded in the UNM context, the panel emphasizes approaches that can be adapted across institutional types and dance environments.

Partnership Cycle in Communities-of-Practice

Cristina Goletti

How do we replace competition, for students, funding, and visibility, with collaboration that strengthens every partner's dance ecosystem? This session offers a repeatable "partnership cycle" developed in response to shared challenges across dance contexts: teacher shortages, uneven access across rural and urban regions, and the ongoing need to make dance legible as learning to broader campus and community stakeholders. Participants will learn a four-part cycle that can be adapted to their own settings: (1) relationship-building and shared vision, (2) co-design of curriculum and professional development, (3) shared delivery and co-teaching, and (4) reflection and evaluation that informs the next iteration. Drawing on communities-of-practice, design thinking (empathize–define–ideate–prototype–test), and Universal Design for Learning, we translate established practice into actionable tools—co-taught modules, shared resource libraries, and evaluation plans that communicate impact in decision-maker language. Attendees will experience a brief embodied warm-up modeling movement as a tool for sense-making and collaborative problem solving, then work in cross-sector teams to draft a one-page Partnership Canvas for a chosen scenario (PK–12 + university, studio + K–12, community center + university, dance + wellness). Teams will "pitch" a pilot plan in 90 seconds and receive rapid peer feedback. Participants leave with editable templates (Partnership Canvas, MOU prompts, co-teaching roles, budget/resource checklist, interdisciplinary starter menu) and a 60-day action plan to initiate a partnership conversation or pilot.

Pedagogy in Practice: Synergy Across Oklahoma

Erika Vasquez, Brandi Kelley, Cameelah Pennington Cook, Adelita Dixon-Hernandez, Erika Vasquez, Maria Krey Gibson, Stormi Luney

Pedagogy in Practice: Synergy Across Oklahoma Secondary Dance Programs: Six Educators / Six Contexts / Shared commitment to Student Learning. This six dance educator panel presentation explores the evolving landscape of secondary dance education in Oklahoma, offering an in-depth examination of practical pedagogical strategies that prioritize student growth and equity. Panelists will discuss how intentional collaboration across schools can bridge gaps in resources, strengthening overall student access and enriching the learning experience. By highlighting culturally responsive, inclusive, and community-connected teaching approaches—from local performance initiatives to inter-district partnerships—this session demonstrates how to move dance education beyond the studio walls. Attendees will engage with proven models for cultivating inclusive environments and will leave with a suite of transferable tools and actionable insights to enhance their own programs and community impact.

Perfectionism in Competitive Dance

Dawn Zinga, Natalie Tacuri

This session examines how perfectionism and perfectionistic climates are experienced by female adolescent dancers within competitive dance studios in Ontario, Canada. Drawing upon quantitative and qualitative studies, we focus on the impacts of perfectionism and its expression by dancers. Additionally, we consider how dance studios can foster perfectionistic climates. Grugan, Fenwick and Olssen (2023)

have argued that training climates like studios can foster unrealistic and perfectionistic ideals that dancers feel compelled to attain. They identified the following five key characteristics of perfectionistic climates: unreasonably high performance expectations seen to be imposed by dance teachers or others in leadership roles; harsh criticism of performance when it does not meet the unreasonable expectations; use of controlling strategies such as rewards or sanctions to put pressure on dancers to perform; the presence of conditional regard such that it fosters to desire to perform at a level that pleases the dance teacher; anxiousness/fear about mistakes in performance or not meeting performance standards that is excessive and combined with the belief that the teacher is vigilant about mistakes. Competitive dance is a context in which dancers' own perfectionistic tendencies can be triggered or ameliorated and where perfectionistic climates may thrive due to the idea that technique needs to be flawless or perfect. We focus on how dance contexts can ameliorate perfectionistic tendencies and create more supportive and mastery-oriented climates. We apply Bourdieu's (1972) concept of doxa to explain how dancers hold doxic understandings dance and dance contexts and that unpacking these taken-for-granted assumptions can help dancers make the implicit explicit. In this way, dancers can be taught to be more aware of the pressures they experience and where those pressures originate. Rimmer (2017) refers to doxic understandings when he says, "this understanding subsequently constructs codes of behaviour, which determine how the teacher expects to teach and how the student expects to learn" (p. 224). While perfectionistic expectations are frequently embedded in teaching practices that can be internalized by dancers, these can also to disrupted and interrogated by dancers and teachers. This session identifies key strategies to help dancers, parents, and teachers become more aware of perfectionism and perfectionistic climates and how to replace those elements with more mastery-focused approaches to support positive outcomes (such as higher levels of motivation, achievement, and self-esteem) while reducing and ameliorating negative aspects (including becoming discouraged, unhealthy body self-image, or low self-esteem) to promote dancer well-being and development.

PK-12 Mentorship Making Dance Learning Visible

Abigail Agresta-Stratton, Gina D'Antonio-Spears, Christine Rudy-Reed, Rebecca McGregor

How do dance educators clearly articulate what rigorous, student-centered dance learning looks and sounds like? How can dance educators translate the energy, creativity, and collaborative nature of a dance classroom into language that communicates academic depth and intentional practice? And how can we confidently articulate our instructional choices, assessment strategies, and learning objectives to support meaningful evaluation conversations and communicate effectively with others in education who may not have a background in dance? Because many observers and decision-makers may not have experience in dance education, educators must be prepared to name, frame, and contextualize their work. This session focuses on strengthening our collective ability to communicate the content knowledge, pedagogical decisions, assessment practices, and classroom culture that define high-quality dance education. Participants will explore strategies for describing safe, supportive, and collaborative learning environments; articulating standards-based lesson design; and making visible the rigor and

innovation embedded in dance classrooms and leave with language, tools, and confidence to advocate for dance programs and clearly represent the depth and impact of our work. This workshop will empower you to communicate the value of dance education effectively.

PK-12 Mentorship Meet Up

Abigail Agresta-Stratton

Are you a part of the PK-12 Mentorship program? Please join us!Would you like to know more about the PK-12 Mentorship Program? Please join us! This is a great opportunity to meet mentees, mentors, mentorship supporters, bridge pod members, and committee members.

Primary Sources Dance: Soundies, Jazz, and Beyond

Peter Bennett, Sarah Gonzalez

What happens when research, movement, and collaboration meet in the studio? This dynamic, movement-centered workshop invites educators to experience a synergistic approach to dance education that fuses primary source research, embodied practice, with collaborative teaching and learning. Using Soundies, 1940s short musical films featuring Black American Dance, we show how archival materials can become active tools for learning, and inspiration for new choreography today. This work grew from co-teaching in K–12 and studio settings, creating powerful synergy between classrooms, age groups, and teaching perspectives. Students worked directly with primary sources and were invited to design their own modes of assessment, choosing how they wanted to engage with and demonstrate understanding of the material through movement, analysis, discussion, or creative response. Conference participants will move, observe, discuss, and reflect as we model this methodology in real time. You'll leave with adaptable, ready-to-use strategies for bringing primary source research into your classroom, strengthening student engagement, and making dance history immediate, physical, and meaningful. This will also provide dance teachers with a unit plan that aligns with national dance standards, is adaptable to multiple settings and populations, and has many assessment options. Come ready to collaborate, experiment, and experience what happens when research and dancing move together.

Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs

Maria Daniel

This workshop invites educators, scholars, dancers and practitioners to explore how Liturgical Dance, a sacred African-Diaspora tradition, can serve as a powerful interdisciplinary framework that progresses the field of dance education. Participants will engage in "mind, body, and soul" movement explorations that encourage dancers to interpret the deep messages of sacred traditions while creating powerful opportunities for storytelling and healing. Liturgical Dance emphasizes polyrhythms, call-and-response, purposeful expression, communal connections, improvisation, and sacred movements. Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs illustrate how culturally rooted traditions can coexist within contemporary academic spaces. In fact, sacred movement practices can enrich curricula across K–12 and higher education by strengthening interdisciplinary connections between dance, music, history, theology, and social-emotional learning. Liturgical Dance techniques and purposeful choreographic strategies can equip educators with tools to guide students in translating Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs into purposeful expression. This process fosters

critical thinking, cultural literacy, emotional intelligence, and kinesthetic awareness which reflect core competencies in advancing dance education. Through collective exploration, dialogue and communal embodiment, we progress the field of dance education and while affirming the rich and historical traditions of African-Diaspora Dance. We approach this topic with deep reverence for the cultural and spiritual traditions embedded in Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, alongside African Diaspora dance practices. The central question guiding this proposal is how dance can deepen sacred expression while strengthening spiritual and communal connection. Our work intentionally integrates Liturgical Dance techniques with sacred traditions, creating space for participants to engage through embodied expression. The workshop is organized in three parts. First, we provide historical and theological context, addressing common objections to bodily movement in sacred settings and examining their origins. Second, we explore movement as a language or offering that is grounded in theological foundations. Next, we guide participants through movement explorations that connect them to the spiritual narratives within Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs. This is informed by literature-based theological reviews and our curriculum which uses arts-based methodology to immerse participants into faith traditions reflecting the human spiritual journey.

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Rebuilding Dance Education in Wisconsin
Chell Parkins
This paper details the development of the new dance education program at UW–Madison. UW–Madison is the birthplace of dance in academia and will celebrate its 100th anniversary in the 2026–2027 school year. While the program was founded to train public school educators and dance was once vibrant in Wisconsin public schools, licensing pathways and school-based programs disappeared in the 21st century. As the inaugural Arnhold Director of Dance Education at UW–Madison, my position was created to bring dance back to Wisconsin schools. This paper outlines how I developed a strategy that moved along three simultaneous pathways and resulted in the creation of the only university-based dance licensing pathway in the state. The first path in my strategic plan involved statewide advocacy. I began by conducting a comprehensive study of the dance landscape in Wisconsin while building relationships with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and the Wisconsin Dance Council. As a result of this research and relationship-building, I led an initiative to protect professional accreditation for future Wisconsin dance educators when the Department of Public Instruction planned to eliminate it. The second path involved developing programs in public schools. I founded the UW Dance Exchange to promote community-centered school programs by mentoring local teaching artists and facilitating residencies in public schools. With a scarcity of licensed dance educators in Wisconsin public schools, the UW Dance Exchange became a platform for university students to collaborate with experienced dance educators and secure practicum placements. The third path focused on developing a licensing program at UW–Madison—something I had been told numerous times would never happen. Our first graduate will be licensed to teach elementary education and dance in 2026. This paper outlines these strategies in depth while also

articulating the program's pedagogical approach, which centers culturally diverse perspectives and lived experiences in dance alongside creative movement to foster spaces of belonging for children in public schools. Grounded in both research and embodied practice, the program draws on culturally responsive-sustaining dance pedagogy and trauma-informed frameworks to remain relevant and effective within the current public school climate. Together, these strategies demonstrate how advocacy, school-based programming, and teacher preparation worked in concert to reestablish dance as a vital and sustainable part of public education in Wisconsin.

Redesigning Dance Curriculum: A Case Study
Daniel Burkholder
Redesigning Undergraduate Dance Curriculum: Integrating Diverse Dance Forms, Meeting Accreditation Standards, and Thriving Under New Budget Models. Over five years, the dance faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee transformed their BFA and BA curriculum to address three critical challenges facing university dance programs today: the need for greater diversity and equity in dance forms, meeting accreditation requirements, and shifting budget models that prioritize student credit hours. Using Design Thinking methodology, the UWM faculty worked through developing shared values and outcomes, then crafted a guiding focus to clarify the core challenges. The result is a curriculum that repositions multiple dance forms as equal sources of artistic inspiration and technical training, while meeting accreditation requirements, and positioning the department for increased financial stability in the near future. The curriculum transformation shifted from a ballet-and-modern-centered program to one requiring two semesters each of ballet, modern, West African dance, and hip-hop, followed by student-selected advanced study and an innovative Physical Practice course that honors faculty hybrid expertise. The faculty successfully navigated National Association of Schools of Dance accreditation standards within existing credit frameworks while expanding diversity and student choice. As the university adopted Responsibility Center Management, emphasizing student credit hours, the redesigned curriculum proved financially beneficial, supporting departmental budget stability. The Three-Pronged Approach: The curriculum serves three essential purposes: (1) Recruitment—diverse offerings attract students from wider training backgrounds; (2) Professional Preparation—graduates develop the versatility required in today's field; (3) Field Evolution—the curriculum models a future where all dance forms hold equal value. Session Format: This session provides an overview of the five-year process and offers participants a framework to adapt to their own contexts, along with specific strategies for beginning curriculum redesign. Time will be reserved for discussion about applying these approaches to participants' programs.

RED-S and its Affects in the Young Dancer
Rachel Kellbach
Dancers are often expected to perform at elite levels while navigating training demands that exceed those of many traditional athletes—yet preventative healthcare for dancers remains limited and inconsistent. This session bridges the gap between medicine and the dance studio through an evidence-based, dancer-informed approach to health, performance, and longevity. Led by a Nurse Practitioner with over a decade of clinical experience in primary care and holistic functional medicine—and a former

competitive dancer and current dance mom—this session highlights the unique health risks dancers face, with a particular focus on the early identification and prevention of Relative Energy Deficiency in Sport (RED-S). Attendees will learn how inadequate fueling, poor recovery, and chronic stress impact growth, bone health, hormonal function, injury risk, and performance. Additional topics include nutrition and fueling for training demands, sleep and recovery optimization, injury prevention, and recognizing warning signs of overtraining. Drawing from both clinical practice and lived experience within the dance world, this session empowers educators, parents, and dancers with practical, actionable strategies to support sustainable performance and long-term wellness—creating healthier dancers today and stronger athletes for life.

Reflections on Changing Bodies/Shifting Landscapes

Mary Fitzgerald, Sumana Mandala

A paper presentation and dialogue that centers on artist Sumana Mandala's performance project, Changing Bodies/Shifting Landscapes. Changing Bodies Shifting Landscapes (CBSL) is a collaborative dance work reflecting on changes in the female body that occur throughout life. This dance, which exists in four different iterations, deals with menstrual health and draws upon research from our own experiences, customs across cultures and the reasoning given for them, and the policies that affect menstruating bodies. After several years of development, this piece weaves together powerful narratives, both from bleeders and non-bleeders, that highlight women's health as a fundamental human right. The collision of creative energy among a varied group of local dancers and musicians resulted in a rich performance collaboration that led to some surprising insights. The session will begin with an overview of the project, including video excerpts of the performances, and then dive into a discussion around the unexpected discoveries that emerged from the project. In the last two iterations of the performance, CBSL brought together a group of artists of different ages, genders, and cultures who practice a wide range of dance forms, from Bharatanrityam to Hip Hop to contemporary modern dance to martial arts and much more. Each of the performers contributed unique artistic knowledge and insights to the creative process that would not have been possible without this particular group of performers. In reflecting on the multiple dimensions of the project, several questions and discoveries have emerged around age, gender, culture, and collaboration. Each presenter will discuss their individual experience of the project, and invite audience members to engage in a broader conversation around these topics.

Reframing Sacred Dance: A Global Lens

Robin Rhodes, Camila Honorio Alves, Samyuktha Punthambekar

Reframing Sacred Dance: A Global Lens is an interactive session that explores how sacred dance traditions carry history, spirituality, and cultural knowledge through the body. Led by three dancer-scholars, the session centers Afro-Brazilian Jongo, Indian Classical Bharatanatyam, and Black American Liturgical Dance. Participants will learn how these sacred dance forms have been shaped by colonial histories and how they continue to support identity, resilience, and community. Through brief storytelling, guided movement experiences, and reflection, attendees will

explore how sacred dance can be taught in ways that honor cultural roots while remaining inclusive in diverse and secular learning spaces. The session emphasizes a key teaching distinction: the difference between teaching someone a dance and teaching someone how to dance. Movement activities are accessible to a wide range of bodies and experience levels, with options for adaptation. Attendees will leave with practical strategies they can use immediately in classrooms, studios, community spaces, and places of worship to teach sacred dance with care, context, and respect.

Reimagining Ballet Pedagogy: What Comes Next?

Sarah Gonzales, Laura Malpass

Are you teaching ballet the way you were taught or the way you wish you had been taught? This highly interactive session invites dance educators to pause, reflect, and actively reshape ballet pedagogy for today's dancers by focusing on the heart of the work: how we teach. Together, we will unpack how ballet pedagogy is transmitted through habits, language, authority, correction, and embodied expectations. Whether your own training felt affirming, harmful, or a complicated mix of both, this session makes space for what we might call disillusioned generativity: acknowledging what has disappointed or wounded us while still believing something better is possible. We ask questions many educators carry quietly: What practices truly support learning and resilience? Which ones exclude or no longer serve? And how do we evolve without discarding what we love about ballet as we imagine a form that is more inclusive for all? The session centers on a collaborative "Keep, Toss, and Add" exercise, helping educators identify pedagogical practices to preserve, release, or experiment with immediately. Attendees will leave with concrete strategies applicable across ballet training spaces. Just as importantly, you are not alone in this work. This session builds connection and shared support. Come ready to think critically, act boldly, and collaborate with a community of educators committed to reimagining ballet for the future!

Reimagining Inclusion Through Mentorship

Samantha Walker

This paper presentation will explore peer-based inclusion as a model for increasing accessibility in dance education for dancers with disabilities. Through research, interviews, personal narrative, and documentary footage, this session will explore how one-on-one mentors support the learning experience for dancers with disabilities, volunteers, and instructors alike. This session highlights the ways in which peer relationships build confidence, social connections, and artistic growth for dancers with disabilities. Attendees will view short clips from a documentary-style dance film and learn about program structures, volunteer training practices, and strategies for implementation in dance spaces. This session aims to inspire educators to integrate peer mentorship, and highlight it as a model to expand access and connection throughout dance education.

Reimagining University Dance Assessment

Nimisha Mahiyaria

This interactive session shares findings from an IRB-approved pilot study I conducted that investigated how university dance teachers conceptualize, develop, and practice assessment in the U.S. The multiple-case study cross-compared Jazz and Kathak dance courses, revealing how personal, professional, and institutional experiences shape dance educators' definitions and purposes of assessment. Five recurring equity-centered

practices were identified: student choice-making, dialogical check-ins, differentiated assessment, cultural responsiveness, and embodied assessment. Together, these practices show how university dance teachers enact equity by designing assessments that honor differences, foster student agency, and challenge traditional hierarchies within dance pedagogy. Attendees will experience a 15-minute presentation of research results followed by a written reflection and a guided discussion. These activities invite participants to consider how the study's findings relate to their own teaching contexts. The session is open to dance educators working in K–12, studio, community, and higher education settings. Attendees will leave with adaptable strategies and reflective tools to support inclusive and equitable assessment practices in their dance programs.

Research Inspiring Teaching: Lessons from Tamiris

Elizabeth McPherson

People often ask me how I find time and energy to do my research and writing while running a college dance program. Of course there is time management involved, but more importantly, the research inspires me in my teaching and administration, giving me fuel to move forward. My current research project is centered on the dancer, choreographer, and teacher Helen Tamiris (1902-1966). One of the first lessons I have learned from her is the importance of shifting and pivoting. For example, when she had no funding to begin a concert dance career, she worked in commercial venues like night clubs and movie houses to raise money to fund her concerts. When the WPA money dried up for the Federal Dance Project, she moved into musical theatre dance. When she was blacklisted as a communist and her work dried up on Broadway, she moved back into concert dance. This ability to find a window when a door was closed is hugely inspirational to me, particularly in navigating the bureaucracy of higher education. Tamiris was also exceptionally adept at garnering publicity. In addition to the standard reviews, she continually got her name into newspapers – from receiving an anonymous gift of a sapphire left at the stage door, to a potential duel between two European aristocrats vying for her favor. While I am not inclined to salacious items about the dance program I head, her model reminds me of the importance of continually reaching prospective students and audiences through strategic posts on social media, a major source of information today. Lastly, Tamiris was known for nurturing the individuality of the dancers who worked and studied with her. She had no interest in mini-me's unlike some of her contemporaries in concert dance. This affirms the scope and goals of the dance program I head. We look for individualistic dancers who have something to say through dance, and we encourage their creative voices throughout their coursework. After a presentation on how my research informs my teaching, I will open the floor up to participants to speak about how they manage, navigate, and integrate various aspects of their careers. My goal is that through sharing, we find additional inspiration to do all the different things we do.

Resilient Bodies: Practices for Challenging Power

Rose Pasquarello Beauchamp

This workshop examines somatic practice as a form of political resistance, focusing on how embodied awareness can challenge systems of power and control. In a world where dominant structures often seek to disconnect individuals from their bodies, somatic practices offer a

radical reclamation of personal autonomy and agency. Through mindful movement, breathwork, and sensory awareness, participants will explore how reconnecting with the body can disrupt patterns of oppression, foster resilience and create community. By grounding ourselves in bodily awareness, we resist the forces that seek to undermine our well-being and limit our potential. This session invites participants to engage in somatic practices that not only promote personal healing and community connection but also serve as acts of solidarity, supporting collective movements toward justice, freedom, and equality.

Rethinking Dance History Through Embodied Pedagogy

Chelsea Hilding

This paper presentation suggests teaching dance history as an embodied, relational, and future oriented pedagogical practice within higher education. Drawing on my work teaching twentieth-century modern dance history at the university level, I examine how historical study can be reconfigured through embodied historiography, student generated archives, and critical pedagogy. Rather than positioning dance history as a static body of knowledge, this paper conceptualizes historical inquiry as a collaborative process shaped through movement, interpretation, and situated embodiment. The presentation situates these pedagogical strategies within current debates in dance studies, pedagogy, and archival theory, particularly scholarship that challenges positivist and extractive models of historical knowledge production. I suggest that embodied approaches to dance history not only deepen students' historical understanding but also reframe the archive as a contested, partial, and performative site. Through examples drawn from undergraduate and graduate coursework, I analyze how assignments such as speculative "Dancestor" writing, embodied historiography exercises, and student constructed archival projects function as both pedagogical and methodological interventions. These practices are framed as responses to contemporary pressures on higher education, including the politicization of DEI initiatives, the increasing mediation of learning through digital and generative technologies, and shifting student relationships to authority and expertise. By foregrounding collaboration, reflexivity, and student voice, the paper demonstrates how dance history pedagogy can cultivate critical historical consciousness while supporting students in developing historically grounded artistic and scholarly identities. Positioned within the NDEO conference theme of SYNERGY, this paper emphasizes the role of higher education dance programs in fostering cross sector dialogue and pedagogical innovation. I argue that embodied historiography offers a framework through which university based dance educators can model collaborative knowledge production and contribute to a more inclusive, critically engaged dance education ecosystem.

Rethinking Pointe Pedagogy—A Progressive Framework

Rebecca Herrin

Pointe training is often approached through isolated milestones, pre-pointe, pointe readiness, or technical correction, rather than as a continuous, developmental learning process. This experiential workshop presents a progressive framework for pointe pedagogy that rethinks how dancers build, refine, and sustain pointe work over time across a range of training contexts. Informed by the 4Pointe method, the framework integrates rehabilitative principles,

somatic awareness, and classical technique to support strength, articulation, coordination, and efficiency at multiple stages of dancer development. Rather than positioning rehabilitation as injury-based or remedial, the session highlights how clarity, progression, and load management—concepts commonly emphasized in rehabilitation settings—can inform foundational pointe training as well as ongoing refinement for dancers already en pointe. Participants will observe and experience representative movement examples that demonstrate how exercises can evolve from supported and preparatory work through standing and pointe-specific applications. Emphasis will be placed on pedagogical decision-making: how educators assess readiness for progression, scaffold learning across levels, and adapt material for diverse student needs without relying on rigid age- or milestone-based criteria. The session centers on principles and progression logic, illustrating how purposeful repetition supports development rather than following a fixed, step-driven syllabus. Designed for dance educators working in studios, K–12 programs, higher education, and community settings, this session foregrounds the synergy that emerges when educators draw from shared movement principles across sectors. By offering a common pedagogical framework, the workshop encourages collaboration between teaching environments and supports greater continuity in dancers' training experiences. Attendees will leave with practical strategies they can apply immediately in their own teaching to support safer, more inclusive, and more sustainable pointe pedagogy—whether working with dancers preparing for pointe, dancers already en pointe, or dancers navigating transitions such as injury recovery or changes in training intensity.

Rethinking Traditions, Reimagining Possibilities

Laura Ann Smyth, Mark Tomasic, Stephanie Liapis

Higher Education is in a moment of flux - our creed to educate the whole person in an inclusive, progressive, and generative way is under siege. We as dancers/ movement practitioners/ physical artists have always been imaginative in responding to obstacles. We face challenges head on through improvisation, generative practices, and steadfast creativity. In a landscape where institutions are being upended and systems are being dissolved, it is important to both find strength in, and fight for, tradition, and approach our craft with fresh eyes, innovative care, and thoughtful dissection. This panel reflects on four systems / traditions / cultural practices that are woven into the fabric of dance education in post-secondary institutions and rethinks how we can approach these activities contemporarily. Specifically, the panel will reimagine how dance departments can better scaffold guest artists into existing curriculum; will offer strategies on how to modernize the process of re-staging historic works; will reflect on the adjudication process on both the micro (student choreography) and the meta (ACDA, etc.) level and consider how to offer constructive criticism that moves the field forward; and, the panel will imagine how company /artist choreographic residencies can function more comprehensively in the continuation of learning through the entirety of a two or four-year program. The goal of the panel is not to add to a culture of scarcity but rather, to offer community focused and abundant driven strategies on how to retool / rethink / reimagine our tried-and-true traditions and practices.

Rhythm for Every Body: The NDI Method

Emily Meisner, Jacqueline Burns

How can we teach rhythmic precision, musicality, and clarity of movement when not every dancer is a tapper, or has access to tap shoes? This movement-based session, co-presented by National Dance Institute based in New York and National Dance Institute of New Mexico, explores how tap-informed pedagogy can be adapted through body percussion and full-body rhythm using the NDI Method™. Led by Jackie Burns (Artistic Director of Outreach Programs, NDI New Mexico), participants will engage in an interactive movement experience that applies tap principles (timing, weight placement, articulation, and rhythmic accuracy) without tap shoes. The class models how the NDI Method™ supports dancers of varied technical backgrounds, age, and abilities while maintaining high expectations for musical precision and embodied clarity. Following the movement portion, Emily Meisner (Director, NDI Collaborative) will guide a structured reflection focused on pedagogy. Together, the presenters will unpack how the teaching strategies demonstrated (clear structure, positive reinforcement, shared language, and differentiation) can be applied across dance styles and sectors, including K-12 schools, studios, higher education, and community-based programs. Participants will leave with concrete tools for integrating rhythm-based learning into their own teaching practice, regardless of genre, and a deeper understanding of how a shared pedagogical framework can travel across styles while remaining responsive to different students and communities. This session positions synergy not only as collaboration between organizations, but as a teaching practice, one that allows educators to adapt technique, expand access, and strengthen dance education across the field.

Rigor Reconsidered: What Are We After?

Christie Bondade, Lele Bell Wesley, Julia deLeon, SK Fetter

"Rigor" is a word that often circulates in dance education scenarios as shorthand for technical difficulty, physical endurance, or elite skill acquisition—definitions revered, even as they are rooted in Western, corrective, and sometimes moralized frameworks. Ideas of rigor are often carried through teaching structures and expectations that quietly shape who thrives, who struggles, and whose ways of knowing are valued. This panel asks: What are we really after when we invoke rigor? What possibilities might open up when rigor is understood as something flexible, relational, and responsive to lived experience? Might we consider how collaborative, synergistic design can enrich our collective practice? Drawing from both studio teaching and theory, this panel brings dance educators together to interrogate how rigor is currently understood, practiced, marketed, and perceived in the field. We will consider how rigor can become rigid, passive, or exclusive when tethered to a single outcome or approach. Panelists will explore how traditional notions of rigor can implicitly position students—particularly dancers who fall outside perceived norms—as problems to be fixed rather than artists to be cultivated, and how working together across contexts can expand what counts as valuable learning. If simply "doing the exercise" is not enough, what lies beyond the task itself? Central to the discussion is the role of intent, authenticity, and attentional engagement. What does an individual bring—emotionally, imaginatively, ethically—to the work? We will examine how focusing solely on mechanics and technique

may paradoxically diminish rigor, and how rigorous listening and responding might offer valuable entry points for students who experience apathy, disconnection, or resistance—where disengagement becomes the enemy of rigor. This panel proposes multiple coexisting modes of rigor: creative, attentional, emotional, physical, and ethical. It asks how different artistic processes call for different versions of rigor, and how improvisation, reflection, and choice-making can foster resilience, agency, and individuated rigor—supporting students in finding their own "edge" rather than conforming to a singular standard. Ultimately, this conversation invites educators to reflect on how centering lived experience and collaborative inquiry can place complex, human multiplicities at the heart of dance pedagogy. Returning to rigor as flexible and relational, the panel considers how curricula, assessment practices, and classroom agreements might be shaped to support agency and meaningful engagement. In pursuit of synergy, we aim to open space for more ethical, inclusive, and artistically vital understandings of what rigor can be—and how working together can progress the field of dance education.

River of Reflection: Storytelling with Kuchipudi

Chinmayee Balabhadrapatruni

What if dance students could tell stories of environmental crisis, social justice, and hope using only their hands, eyes, and bodies? This experiential workshop introduces dance educators across all sectors to the expressive vocabulary of Kuchipudi, a classical Indian dance theater form, as a powerful tool for teaching narrative through movement. Participants will learn foundational techniques of dance theater, a format rooted in abhinaya (dramatic expression) including mudras (hand gestures), eye and eyebrow articulation, and neck movements that form a codified language of storytelling. Through the lens of the Ganga River narrative—a sacred water source facing modern environmental devastation—attendees will explore how classical Indian dance techniques translate complex social justice themes into embodied storytelling. This session bridges traditional Indian classical dance with contemporary pedagogical needs across dance studios, K-12 programs, and community settings. Whether you teach ballet, modern, hip-hop, or creative movement, you'll discover how gesture-based storytelling can enhance your students' expressive abilities, deepen their engagement with meaningful narratives, and expose them to a new art form with a rich cultural history. The workshop includes: hands-on learning of basic mudras and facial expressions; exploration of non-linear narrative structures including sanchari (multiple perspectives shown through quick changes in character), flashbacks, and layered storytelling; small group creation applying these techniques to the climate crisis narrative; and concrete strategies for adapting these tools to your own teaching context. This session demonstrates how classical Indian dance—historically underrepresented in Western dance education—can serve as a collaborative bridge across genres, sectors, and communities. Participants will leave with practical tools to incorporate gesture-based storytelling into their existing curricula, regardless of their students' dance background or physical abilities. This session embodies NDEO's theme of SYNERGY by showcasing how collaboration between dance sectors and genres strengthens our field. By bringing techniques from Indian classical dance into conversation with Western dance education practices, we create more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments. When studio teachers, K-12 educators, and higher education faculty learn a

shared vocabulary of gesture and expression, we expand what's possible in dance education and move closer to Dance Education for ALL. This session can help us as dancers and dance educators discover how storytelling techniques can address our contemporary and social justice concerns, and how learning from underrepresented dance forms enriches our entire pedagogical toolkit.

Rooted Collaboration: African Diaspora Dance
Tamara Sangobamike Williams
This session is intended for dance educators, choreographers, teaching artists, and community practitioners who are seeking culturally grounded, inclusive, and collaborative approaches to teaching across institutional, studio, and community-based dance environments. It is especially relevant for those interested in African diasporic movement traditions, embodied pedagogy, and practices that support collective learning, equity, and sustainable community engagement. This movement-based session explores how African diasporic dance traditions support connection, inclusion, and shared purpose among dance educators and community practitioners. Drawing from practices such as the Ring Shout, Samba, and Orixa-based movement, participants will engage in rhythmic and improvisational structures that emphasize history, embodied awareness, and interdependence. Through guided movement, call-and-response, and improvisational exploration, the session centers embodied listening and movement as forms of research and dialogue. This work emerges from my ongoing inquiry into how African diasporic movement practices offer platforms for collaboration and inclusivity across dance education spaces. In response to increasing fragmentation within the field, between institutions, communities, and dance forms, the session models principles of rhythm, repetition, and movement fellowship found in African diasporic traditions. Organized around experiential learning, participants will engage in movement, reflection, and discussion designed to support educators in translating embodied collaboration into their own pedagogical and community contexts.

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SCDEN: Impacting K-12 Dance in South Carolina
Meredith Sims, Jessica Moore, Gabrielle A. Tull, Stephanie Milling
The session is a panel discussion on the impacts of the South Carolina Dance Education Network, regionally known as SCDEN. SCDEN, founded in 2021, is a professional organization that provides equitable access to quality professional dance education resources in the state. Resources, including authentic dance pedagogical and methodological frameworks, enable teachers and students to critically examine subject-area content in relation to larger sociocultural contexts and constructs. The session will unpack the success, struggles, and logistical groundwork needed to create and successfully facilitate a state-level recognized arts institute for teacher continuing education certification credit.

Seeing and Being Seen in Dance Pedagogy
Kellyn Mylechreest
Being observed by teachers, peers, and audiences is often positioned as a measure of discipline, artistry, and success for dance students, especially within higher education programming. However, the experience of being constantly watched extends beyond pedagogical

observation into forms of surveillance that shape students' bodies, identities, and sense of belonging. Through movement, dialogue, and discussion, this session will explore how the pedagogical gaze contributes to students' and teachers' sense of physical and psychological well-being. Drawing upon Foucauldian theories of discipline and surveillance, we will utilize embodied reflection and group discussion, to imagine alternative holistic teaching opportunities to redefine practices of observation in dance classrooms. This workshop is inspired by a pilot study conducted on BFA dance conservatory alumni, yet the findings showcase relevant implications for teachers of diverse pedagogical contexts. Participants are invited to critically reflect on their own pedagogical practices, and perhaps their own dance upbringing, to imagine new ways of "seeing" and "being seen" through ethical and trauma-informed dance pedagogy, to develop healthy dancers of mind and body.

Seeking Synergy in Dance & Healthcare Partnership

Melissa Melpignano, alexx shilling, Sarah Wilbur

Artists across the United States are being actively recruited into an expanding arts-and-health labor market, often without adequate preparation, protections, or say in how their work is valued. Dance educators are uniquely positioned as artists, advocates, and architects of a more just creative care workforce. How can dance practitioners work in synergy with healthcare providers within a healthcare system dominated by economic, professional, and access hierarchies? The three presenters offer theoretical and experiential knowledge to address this urgent question while engaging the participants through provocations, embodied and verbal responses, and opportunities for collective envisioning. After a brief historical overview of the rise of arts/health programs, Wilbur examines the parallel growth of arts/health/wellbeing credentials for trauma-adjacent care work. Using the National Organization for Arts in Health's AIHP-C credential as a case study in "professionalization without protection," she asks how artists' politics of participation might yield impactful dance programming alongside stronger wage floors, worker safety, and employer accountability in this unregulated field. How can dance educators and organizations like NDEO contribute to moving from competency-building toward an ecological approach linking curriculum design, labor standards, and structural advocacy? In this conversation, shilling occupies a unique position: as a choreographer, performer, and dance educator, certified in multiple somatic methods, yoga, and Pilates, they move as a chameleon through dance, wellness, and healthcare spaces.These nimble shifts across varying contexts constitute a rich form of intrinsic knowledge. How can we in dance recognize such knowledge in order to advocate for sustainable collaborations with colleagues in healthcare and beyond? Drawing on personal experience and successful approaches, shilling's movement-based interventions explore the conditions that enable meaningful synergy and bodily empowerment.

SEL through Literature and Dance

Kelly Stokes

In the current school milieu, classroom and special area teachers face new challenges regarding student behavior. In addition to a decline in student learning in reading and math, educators have discovered that students lack

basic skills in areas such as civility, kindness, conflict resolution, and self-management. The synergy of dance movement with Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) offers a unique bridge to develop many of these skills. Participants in this session will experience a series of literature-based dance lessons that explore SEL concepts such as personal space, resilience, mindfulness, and kindness. The session will also cover topics such as social-emotional development, effective collaboration strategies, and interdisciplinary approaches. Lessons were originally aimed at grades K-2 but can be applicable and adapted to any grade/age group and to those with special needs.

Self-Coaching for Resilience: A Model Workshop

Julie Lucia

Dance educators are uniquely positioned to support adolescent dancers' well-being and resilience, and many seek practical ways to do so within rigorous training environments, such as private studios or university dance departments. This experiential session is designed to immerse dance educators in an evidence-based, developmentally aligned workshop of self-coaching practices created for adolescent and emerging adult dancers ages 14 to 24. Attendees will participate in a workshop model that includes guided discussions, reflections, and thought exercises. Core areas of focus include values identification and alignment, identifying and altering negative thinking traps, understanding and managing different types of stress, and practicing self-compassion as a counterpoint to self-judgment. Throughout the session, educators will apply self-coaching principles and in doing so, gain an understanding of meeting their dancers' developmental needs. Whether attendees choose to integrate a similarly-designed workshop into their syllabi or incorporate the concepts bit by bit into their existing curricula, they will gain confidence in their understanding of adolescent needs and strategies for inviting student voices to the forefront. Attendees can expect to receive handouts that, together with their participation, will inform their translation of the learning. While this is not a workshop "recipe" that educators should feel compelled to copy, it offers a series of "ingredients" from which they can choose to flavor their practice. These ingredients include practical strategies educators can teach their dancers to use independently and interdependently, in and out of the studio, to support their well-being and increase their capacity for resilience.

Serving Shapes: Vogue for Early Childhood

Danielle Staropoli

Vogue emerged from Black and Latinx LGBTQ+ ballroom communities as a collective practice rooted in self-expression, empowerment, and being fully seen within a supportive community. This session explores the intersection of Old Way Vogue and early childhood dance education, where lines, shape-making, and runway walks become vehicles for creative choice-making, confidence-building, and collaborative learning for young children. For movers ages 4-6, it is important that their early exposure to dance reflects diverse dance lineages while remaining developmentally appropriate. This session demonstrates how the values and structures of Vogue (community, individuality, and collective celebration) can be adapted across early childhood classrooms, schools, studios, and community programs. Participants will experience a brief history of Vogue, a developmental warm-up, a picture walk, a line and shape exploration grounded in

Old Way principles, an across-the-floor sequence, and a creative dance-making task culminating in a celebratory Ball.

Small-Town Synergy

Maia Mahosky

Rural dance educators are impacted by a variety of unique environmental factors, potentially including lower economic opportunity, limited student populations, limited performance venues, lack of access to continuing education opportunities, and more. While these challenges may be daunting, the synergy of small-town economics can work to the creative dance teacher's advantage! In this workshop, presenter Maia Mahosky will discuss some of the challenges she's experienced as a rural dance educator, and how collaborating with local small business owners, corporations, chambers of commerce, and other agencies has counteracted some of these challenges. These partnerships have allowed her to explore the breadth of her own creative expression while also providing additional performing and learning opportunities to rural students and audiences. Following the presentation of Maia's collaborative work within rural communities, attendees will be prompted through an exploration of the opportunities and relationships available to them within their own communities. This portion of the workshop will include time for brainstorming, writing, and discussing ideas of spaces, organizations, and/or individuals who may support the dance educator in their pursuit of synergistic prospects. Time will also be allotted for questions and further discussion.

Somatic Experiences for Hospice Caregivers

Elizabeth Shea

The World Health Organization reports that each year, over 56.8 million people globally need palliative and hospice care; most of these patients come from low and middle- income countries, and laypeople often carry the burden of caring for family members and friends. One of the difficulties of non-medical care in end-of-life circumstances is navigating situations where patients have compromised communication skills due to dementia, severe illness, or other circumstances. Already at a disadvantage in terms of medical training, family members or friends can struggle to read cues from patients and provide adequate levels of comfort. Indeed, learning to discern patient body language could greatly aid care from non-medical caregivers. Somatic study and practice may be a tool for developing observational and sensory skills in caregivers. As individuals develop the ability to notice, by experiencing and practicing movement while observing their own bodymind sensations, they also develop the ability to take these skills outward and read such actions in others. Utilizing my self-developed system of somatic practice (SomaLab), as well as my first-person experience as a family hospice caregiver, I have created a framework for deepening body sensation, awareness, and empathy for non-medical hospice care workers. This session will begin with an overview of SomaLab, presenting tools and tasks and reviewing scaffolding from both empirical and anecdotal sources that define a somatic approach. A framework for designing and implementing group movement experiences follows, noting flexible options for differing populations and participants with differing comfort levels regarding movement. Finally, I will present visual media examples (video, photos) of my own sessions with caregivers.

Somatic Pedagogy for Early Childhood

Hetty King

This paper presentation will share my doctoral research into the possibilities of a somatic dance education pedagogy for the early childhood dance education class. Participants will hear an overview of the research project. However, the primary focus will be on the research's key findings on student learning and pedagogical strategies. I will highlight the three focal students in the project and review their learning trajectories described as self-to-self somatic stories. The two key pedagogical strategies of the stance of non-interference and the co-creation of a somatic community of practice will be described with an emphasis on how they supported the student learning. I will define and explain the term' personal literacy', which I coined to describe the intersection of somatic and dance education pedagogies investigated in this research, to teach about the whole self. The session will end with a brief question-and-answer period.

Somatic Practices for Self-Care

Susan Bauer

Would you like to relax, de-stress, and feel more inspired, while learning essential somatic skills to teach to your teen and young adult dancers? In this workshop, participants experience sample somatic movement activities that encourage a more grounded, embodied presence. As educators, focusing on self-care first is essential for our own wellbeing, while enhancing our embodied experience is also central to the ability to teach the material. The presenter will then introduce her “Eight Pedagogy Principles” from her book, The Embodied Teen. The pedagogy principles offer a framework for introducing somatic practices, which can be adapted based on one’s particular background and student population. When approached with care, we can benefit from these practices ourselves and learn to skillfully invite young dancers into somatic practices--helping them to thrive, now and into adulthood. Come move, explore, and emerge refreshed for the conference!

Somatic Stress Release; Applied Polyvagal Theory

Anne Burnidge

In this workshop we will discuss the science behind the body's stress response as explored by Stephen Porges in Polyvagal Theory. Through simple movement, mindfulness and breathing exercises, dancers and dance educators will learn techniques that they can use on their own or in in an educational setting to help address tension, pain, fatigue, disconnection, and more. An introduction to Polyvagal Theory (PVT) will help contextualize the work and further illuminate how self-regulation and co-regulation function in the dance studio and rehearsal spaces. Exercises from Arielle Schwartz’s work, “Vagus nerve stimulation to enhance emotional & physical health” will be introduced and applications to dance training will be presented. PVT also provides compelling resources that dance educators can use to support resiliency, enhance physical and mental preparation, and inform personal self-care practices. As more research is emerging regarding trauma-informed teaching, it has become clear that the methods and practices from Polyvagal Theory, PVT, have relevance to our work as dance educators. This work grew out of a need post-Covid for many dance educators to step back and examine stress and burnout and to investigate recuperative strategies and resiliency practices. During Covid, I began to explore Polyvagal Theory and to formulate applications to dance training and to dance educator self-care. This was prompted by the demand on dance teachers to simultaneously tend to their own needs while also attending to their

students during a time when many of us were experiencing extreme stress, grief, loss, fear, and health concerns. Polyvagal theory is underpinned by the concepts of safety, co-regulation, and connection. Effective relationships are based on sending and receiving signals of safety. My work so far has focused on teaching various somatic techniques to connect to the self, to use breath to self-regulate and connect to others, and to use movement techniques to help the neuromuscular system to be flexible and responsive. Coursework with the Polyvagal Institute, and Arielle Schwartz, and work with other PVT informed dance educators, including Becky Dyer, have informed my workshops and conference presentations on these topics. While it is common to find articles where Dance/Movement Therapy is incorporating PVT, there are only a few dance education-related publications. Bradshaw-Yerby and Nickel's 2024 JODE article, "Safety, Social Connection, and Learning: A Polyvagal Theory Framework for Dance Education," is aimed at PVT strategies within the classroom. My work aims to bring PVT to dance teachers so they can broaden and inform their own self-regulation practices as well as incorporate the strategies into their teaching to enhance the learning community and strengthen positive outcomes for their students. The workshop introduces gentle breathwork practices, vagal nerve stimulation techniques, mindfulness and simple movement sequences. Participants will explore the material on their own, and will be invited to work with partners and in small groups. The concepts can be easily adapted to a dance education setting - they can be used for warm-up/cool-down, as complementary practices, as a part of somatics or wellness classes, as preparation or recuperation for rehearsal/performance, and more. Time will be allotted to discuss applications to participant's specific dance education settings. In general, somatics challenges traditional approaches to dance education. A mind-body approach to dance is centered on the first-person experience of the learner and focuses on a non-hierarchical approach to teaching/learning. Cultivating awareness and self-discovery are primary goals of somatics. PVT offers techniques for practitioners to become more aware of their nervous systems; to notice when they might be collapsed, or hyper-aroused; to notice how/what they are feeling when they are interacting with others; and to claim responsibility for their own responses/actions. It also builds a sensitivity for the nervous systems of others and a capacity to build connection.

Somatic Synergy in Technique Class

Timothy Lynch

Somatic Synergy: Reframing Daily Technique Class as Collaborative, Inclusive Practice. How do you show up for daily technique class? Are you rushing in with coffee in hand, mentally reviewing your to-do list? Are your students doing the same? Across higher education, K–12 programs, studios, and community spaces, technique class often prioritizes external form and productivity. This movement-based workshop proposes a shift: approaching daily technique through a somatic lens that centers awareness, nervous system regulation, and internal sensation as foundations for technical growth. Drawing from breathwork, yoga-based integration, the Alexander Technique, and the anatomical research of Irene Dowd, participants will experience a structured, replicable framework that includes (1) a guided arrival practices to cultivate presence; (2) anatomical clarity for efficient alignment and reduced tension; (3) awareness of habitual movement patterns; and (4) integration of somatic

principles into traditional technique exercises. These tools are adaptable across sectors and age groups. This approach advances the field by reframing rigor as embodied efficiency rather than aesthetic conformity. By centering sensation over comparison, educators can reduce burnout, minimize injury, and cultivate collaborative classroom cultures.
Somatic-informed teaching also expands access: supporting dancers with disabilities, neurodivergent learners, aging movers, and students from diverse cultural movement traditions by decentering a single technical ideal. In a period of collective stress and rapid change, how we begin class matters. When educators across sectors adopt shared somatic frameworks, we foster synergy between body and mind, teacher and student, and across dance communities—moving toward more inclusive, sustainable dance education for all.

Speaking Touch: CRP Meets Contact Improvisation

Misti Galvan

Contact Improvisation thrives on physical dialogue between partners, but what happens when we add verbal dialogue to deepen understanding? This experiential workshop explores the synergy between Critical Response Process (CRP) and Contact Improvisation (CI), demonstrating how structured verbal reflection can reveal invisible experiences in touch-based partnering and strengthen collaboration in dance spaces. CRP, developed by Liz Lerman, provides a framework for giving and receiving feedback that honors the artist's intentions while inviting meaningful dialogue. While typically used in choreographic and performance contexts, CRP offers untapped potential for community-based and somatic dance practices where touch and partnering are central. Contact Improvisation is often practiced in community spaces with adults from diverse backgrounds and experience levels, not only trained dancers. Many university students engage with CI through student-led improvisation groups. This session brings CRP into CI practice, creating synergy between methodologies that support more inclusive, communicative teaching environments across varied contexts. Participants will experience a carefully scaffolded progression from simple partnered improvisations to more complex Contact Improvisation work, practicing how to articulate embodied sensations and partner dynamics through CRP's structured dialogue. By setting personal practice intentions and engaging in verbal reflection with their partners, participants discover how the same physical exchange can be felt and perceived differently by each body. This work addresses equity and inclusion by making visible the often-invisible dynamics in touch-based partnering. Power imbalances, different sensory experiences, and varied comfort levels with physical contact are brought into conscious dialogue rather than remaining unspoken. The CRP structure centers agency for both movement partners in a duet and assists in balancing power dynamics, or at least acknowledging and working on combatting them through voicing discomfort or naming their actual experience. This framework provides a respectful protocol for discussing vulnerability, consent, and diverse embodied experiences. The tools and approaches shared in this session transfer across multiple teaching contexts: community Contact Improvisation jams and classes, university improvisation courses and partnering work, studio-based duet choreography, and any dance setting where touch and physical correction are involved. Participants will also learn variations for small-group formats where observers facilitate dialogue. By uniting embodied and verbal ways

of knowing, we strengthen collaboration and communication in dance education.

Strong, Safe, and Still Dancing
Amanda McCorkle, Kaysie S. Brown, Ana Brotons
This panel explores strategies for integrating strength training, anatomical awareness, and somatic practices into contemporary dance education, with a particular emphasis on injury prevention and the safe execution of acrobatic and partnering skills. Drawing from our work as college dance educators, we frequently encounter students who arrive with advanced technical abilities developed through years of studio training, yet with limited cross-training experience or anatomical understanding. These gaps often contribute to chronic injuries that require not only physical rehabilitation, but also a re-education of movement habits and learning frameworks. We will share pedagogical approaches for weaving cross-training modalities, embodied anatomy, and mindfulness into both technique classes and broader teaching practices. The panel will also address how foundational acrobatic principles and non-binary, non-gendered approaches to weight-sharing can be taught safely and accessibly across university, K–12, and studio contexts. Central to this discussion is the importance of empowering dancers to advocate for strength alongside technique, supporting more sustainable, resilient, and long-term dance careers.

Student Teachers Engage Communities Through Dance
Whitney Bleick, Chell Parkins, Leah Repenshek
This panel presentation highlights the experiences of students enrolled in the dance education program at UW-Madison, where culturally responsive-sustaining and trauma-informed pedagogies center communities in equitable dance education programs. Dr. Chell Parkins will share how she created the dance education certification program and the UW Dance Exchange (UWDE), a program taking dance directly into public schools at no cost to families. She will share how she carefully chose and crafted the information and tactics to prepare emerging teaching artists to go into unique communities. Drawing from both educational research and lived teaching experiences, the presenters approach this topic through an experiential and reflective lens as dancers and emerging educators. Their work is shaped by participation in developing dance education programs that collaborate with public schools and community centers serving Hmong, Latino, economically marginalized, and inclusive special education populations. These programs address disparities in access to dance education by incorporating instruction directly within school and community spaces at times when all students can participate. This session will highlight how established frameworks of culturally responsive-sustaining and trauma-informed pedagogy guide lesson design, classroom structure, and teacher preparation. Attendees will be introduced to example lesson plans that have been successfully implemented in diverse educational settings and will explore how these lessons reflect principles of autonomy, creativity, cultural relevance, and emotional safety. Through these examples, presenters demonstrate how pedagogical research can translate into meaningful and practical strategies. Participants will also hear firsthand accounts from emerging teachers who have applied these frameworks in real teaching environments. These reflections will illustrate how intentional pedagogical choices by Dr. Parkins have positively impacted children's

engagement, self expression, and social-emotional development, while also shaping the student presenters' own growth as educators. This session addresses issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access by examining how dance education can become a consistent and supportive presence in spaces where it has previously been absent. By centering community collaboration and reflective teaching practices, the dance certification program and the UWDE work to normalize dance as part of children's everyday learning experiences. Attendees will leave with a refreshed understanding of dance education as a tool for promoting equity and empowerment, along with practical strategies that they can adapt for their own classrooms, studios, and programs. This presentation emphasizes the importance of preparing education to teach with intention, cultural awareness, and care, ensuring that dance education is accessible and nurturing for every child.

Supporting Older Adult Rejuvenation
Adrienne Clancy
Dr. Adrienne Clancy leads a movement session demonstrating techniques for teaching creative movement to older adults. The workshop emphasizes pedagogy for participants with cognitive, hearing, and mobility differences, highlighting the benefits of dance, music, storytelling, and creative movement in supporting physical, cognitive, and social wellness. Attendees will experience accessible strategies for fostering engagement and inclusion in diverse older adult populations, gaining practical tools to apply in classrooms, studios, or community programs.

Surveillance in Dance: How We Watch Matters
Michelle Cole
This paper presentation examines how carceral logics- systems of surveillance, discipline, and control rooted in white supremacy- manifest within dance education spaces. Drawing on prison abolition scholarship (Angela Davis, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Mariame Kaba), Black studies (Saidiya Hartman, W.E.B. Du Bois), and surveillance studies (Simone Browne), this research interrogates how seemingly neutral pedagogical tools can shift into mechanisms of racialized surveillance. Using an auto-ethnographic methodology, I employ a self-narrative analysis of a classroom experience as a Black guest dance educator in a public high school, focusing specifically on the use of the camera as a tool of documentation, extraction, and control. The presentation distinguishes between veillance (neutral watching) and surveillance (oversight from a position of power), asking when and how this shift occurs, and for whose gaze. By situating dance education within broader histories of racialized surveillance and the afterlife of slavery, this session invites dance educators to critically reflect on their own practices, particularly around documentation, observation, and guest teaching. The paper ultimately calls for more equitable, abolitionist-informed approaches to dance pedagogy that resist extractive and disciplinary logics.

Swing Nation: Teaching Understudy & Swing Training Through Embodied Systems
Lauren Haughton Gillis
(Approximately 50% presentation, 50% guided dance class) This session introduces a structured, movement-centered framework for teaching swing and understudy training in musical theatre. Traditionally learned through ad hoc professional experiences, swing work is

reframed here as a teachable, embodied skill set appropriate for higher education, conservatory programs, and professional training contexts. The presentation portion will outline core pedagogical systems for learning multiple tracks—focusing on music, choreography, spatial awareness, and organizational strategies—grounded in current industry practice and arts education research. The movement portion will place participants directly inside the swing experience through a guided dance class, where attendees will learn, layer, and rotate multiple choreography tracks in real time. Participants will explore how embodied memory, spatial mapping, and adaptive rehearsal strategies can be integrated into dance and musical theatre curricula. The session emphasizes swings and understudies as specialized artists whose work requires precision, resilience, and advanced cognitive-motor integration.Learning Objectives: Participants will: Identify key distinctions between swing and understudy work and their implications for dance pedagogy. Apply embodied strategies for learning and retaining multiple choreography tracks. Practice spatial mapping, mirroring, and rapid track switching through movement. Explore rehearsal tools that support organization, adaptability, and confidence. Gain practical methods for integrating swing training into dance and musical theatre programs. Part I: Presentation (Approx. 35 minutes) Defining swing and understudy work as a distinct, teachable craft. Pedagogical foundations: experiential learning, constructivism, and reflective practice. Systems for learning choreography, tracking space, and managing cognitive load. Cultivating a “swing disposition”: adaptability, confidence, and resilience. Part II: Dance Class / Embodied Practice (Approx. 35 minutes) Learning a short choreography phrase across multiple “tracks”. Practicing spatial shifts, mirroring, and layered responsibilities. Rotating roles to simulate real-world swing demands. Reflection on how embodied experience reinforces pedagogical concepts. Targeted for dance educators, musical theatre faculty, teaching artists, and performers interested in contemporary training models that integrate movement, cognition, and professional practice. Takeaways: Attendees will leave with concrete movement exercises, rehearsal structures, and curricular ideas that can be immediately applied in dance technique classes, musical theatre workshops, and interdisciplinary training environments.

Swinging in the Big Apple

Carol Lonnie

This session introduces participants to authentic jazz dance vocabulary as taught by legendary Savoy Ballroom dancer Pepsi Bethel. Participants will learn and perform the iconic Whitey’s Lindy Hoppers’ Big Apple choreography while developing foundational skills in both partner and individual dancing through the Lindy Hop style. The session begins with a warm-up rooted in authentic jazz technique, exploring key movement vocabulary and highlighting the influential dancers who shaped the history and evolution of jazz dance .Progressing across the floor with stylized movement phrases, participants will build quick footwork, coordination, and rhythmic clarity, then apply these skills to learning, exploring, and manipulating movement from the Big Apple choreography. Through guided practice in technique, choreographic exploration, and improvisation, participants will deepen their skill set, musicality, and creative expression within Pepsi Bethel’s jazz dance style.

Syncopated Lineages: Embodying the Jazz Canon

Laina Reese

Jazz dance education sits at the intersection of history, culture, technique, and innovation. Yet the “jazz canon” is often taught as static—defined by set names, techniques, and choreographer, rather than as a dynamic continuum shaped by Black social dance, artistry, and cultural expression. This movement session invites educators to investigate the canon through an embodied, historically grounded, and student-responsive lens. The session will begin with a warm-up rooted in African diasporic movement principles that influenced early jazz dance: groundedness, polyrhythm, isolations, and call-and-response. Through short movement phrases, participants will experience how these lineages retain core rhythmic and expressive qualities while reflecting distinct stylistic developments. The second portion of the workshop introduces practices for connecting canonical jazz material with the movement vocabularies today’s students bring into the studio—from contemporary commercial jazz to hip-hop-informed stylizations to social-media-driven aesthetics. Educators will engage in guided improvisation, phrase manipulation, and reflective dialogue focused on making space for student identity and cultural knowledge within jazz education, all while preserving the form’s historical integrity and Black cultural origins. This session fosters synergy between past and present, culture and technique, and educator and student expertise, this session advances the field of jazz dance education through collaborative, inclusive, and historically accountable practice.

Synergistic Assessment: A K-12 Festival Model

Sanja Korman, Paris Kent

How does a school district transform a 20+year-old performance tradition into a rigorous, standards-based assessment ecosystem? This paper presentation chronicles the evolution of the Houston Independent School District’s (HISD) Dance Montage and Emerging Choreographers Festival. Originally a non-adjudicated performance, the festival underwent a pedagogical revolution by implementing formal assessments based on State and National Dance Standards and the Liz Lerman Critical Response Process. A unique hallmark of this model is the Shared Three-Pillar Rubric (Choreography, Performance, and Technique). Attendees will learn how HISD utilizes the same evaluative criteria for both faculty and student choreography. This creates a profound synergy: it elevates student work by providing a professional mirror and gives faculty a clear benchmark for their own artistic growth. To ensure objectivity, we utilize anonymous adjudication and annual training to align judges with district goals. Beyond the numbers, this session explores the "art of the festival." We will discuss how HISD fosters a collaborative rather than competitive culture by cultivating a vibrant "festival vibe", bolstered by master classes led by prominent local artists and strategic community sponsorships. These partnerships not only ensure the event’s financial sustainability but also elevate the professional atmosphere, signaling to students that their creative work holds real-world value and professional merit. This model also functions as a Professional Development (PD) engine. Through "observational pedagogy," teachers witness diverse teaching methods from guest artists that they can immediately bring back to their classrooms. We will share how we utilize adjudication scores, including audio and written feedback, not just as grades, but as data points to measure student mastery. Attendees will leave with a blueprint for creating a synergistic assessment model that balances administrative

rigor with a celebratory community spirit. We will provide the HISD Three-Pillar Rubric, a guide for implementing Critical Response, and strategies for securing sponsorships and "festival branding." Join us to see how two decades of evolution have turned a simple performance into a cornerstone of K-12 dance education that empowers every participant.

Synergistic Models for Higher Ed and Community

Grace Gallagher, Madeline J. Harvey, Julia Cooper

This panel-based session explores how higher education dance programs can design and sustain reciprocal partnerships with community, studio, and K–12 environments through intentional engagement practices. Grounded in applied pedagogy and community-based learning, the session centers on concrete examples of engagement work and the realities of implementing, maintaining, and evolving these initiatives over time. Attendees can expect a facilitated, discussion-oriented experience that emphasizes practical insight and reflective exchange. The session will begin with brief, structured presentations from three panelists outlining engagement initiatives developed at Colorado State University over the past seven years. These initiatives include: Dance Lab, a college preparatory and youth summer program that expands access to college-level dance training; Dance Repertory and Engagement, a curricular model that integrates community-centered learning, student facilitation, and reflective practice, and Body/Speak, a collaborative performance platform that supports local artists while carving shared spaces for creative exchange. Each initiative will be presented as a concise case study, addressing goals, structure, populations served, student involvement, and current outcomes. Panelists will intentionally address both successes and ongoing challenges associated with this work. Discussion topics will include balancing growth with sustainability, navigating cost and accessibility, measuring impact beyond participation numbers, supporting student learning through applied engagement, and responding to changing institutional and community contexts. Particular attention will be given to how engagement practices are shaped by place, partnerships, and available resources. Following the panel presentations, attendees will engage in guided discussion facilitated by the panelists. Prompts will invite participants to reflect on their own teaching, programming, or administrative contexts and consider how similar engagement strategies might be adapted to their settings. Attendees will be encouraged to share questions, challenges, and examples from their own practice in a supportive, collegial environment. Participants will leave the session with adaptable frameworks for integrating community engagement into curriculum and programming, strategies for involving students in meaningful applied learning experiences, and considerations for sustaining access-oriented initiatives over time. This session is designed for dance educators, administrators, and teaching artists working across higher education, dance studios, K–12 settings, and community-based environments who are interested in strengthening connections between educational institutions and the communities they serve through thoughtful, practice-informed approaches.

Synergy in Motion: Scaffolding Collaborative Chore

Lacey Sheppard, Nicole Deming

Step into synergy through movement in this dynamic, hands-on choreography experience.

Participants will create a personal movement phrase and through guided collaboration with a partner, will merge two solos into a duet, while respecting each dancer's original voice. By exploring connection, contrast, unison, and spatial relationships through intentional prompts, duets will then evolve into quartets, amplifying collective decision-making and creative problem-solving. This session immerses educators in a scaffolded choreographic process that models clear structures, purposeful prompts, and instructional strategies they can immediately transfer to their own classrooms to support student creativity, collaboration, and compositional confidence.

SYNERGY OF DANCE THERAPY INFUSED DANCE EDUCATION

Diane Duggan

Infusing concepts and strategies of dance therapy into dance education best practices can create a way of working that exponentially boosts the power and efficacy of a dance education program. It creates a different way of understanding and working that is especially potent for teaching students with emotional, learning, intellectual, physical and multiple disabilities. The synergy described in this presentation is not a product of collaboration between two individuals but of the integration of two different methodologies that both utilize dance to engage, discover the strengths, meet the needs of, and teach children and youth with disabilities. One approach, dance therapy, also called dance/movement therapy, derives from a medical model and focuses on healing. The other, dance education, arises from an educational model that centers learning. A genuine synergy ensues when dance therapy is infused into dance education, creating a powerful practice with deeper understandings and more effective strategies than the elements of the two separate practices. It is an especially effective way to include dancers with disabilities and develop engaging curriculums that recognize their strengths, honor their experiences and respond to their needs. Dance educators attending this session will learn about goals of dance therapy infused dance education that differ from those of dance education by itself. These include self-awareness, self-regulation, socialization, awareness of the environment, expanding the movement repertoire (including different genres of dance), and increasing a sense of self-worth. They will explore how to create a student-centered curriculum, based on student movement, experiences and interests, that engages students and opens the possibility of expanding to explore unfamiliar movement styles and dance genres. During the workshop participants will engage in movement experiences designed to teach dance therapy strategies, including picking up and organically developing students' movement and creating a responsive framework to facilitate student-centered choreography that enables students to tell their own stories in dance. Participants will view slides that illustrate these processes. Experientials will include Chacian circle dancing, named after Marian Chace, a pioneer of dance therapy, and an art and movement experiential that embodies a process for organically developing movement. Participants will put their learning into practice in small group movement experiences. The workshop will conclude with an opportunity for participants to ask questions and reflect on what they would like to integrate into their teaching. Participants will leave the session with understandings and skills and plans for their implementation in their own dance education practices.

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Tactile Feedback Techniques: Theory & Applications

Donna Dragon

Touch or tactile feedback as pedagogy in teaching dance has long been used in k-12 programs; College and University settings; community organizations; private dance studios; and teaching artists programs. Given the widespread use of touch as a tool in teaching dance and its increasing scrutiny for lacking student consent; potential for misuse; and psychological and professional risks begs the question, “Where do dance teachers learn tactile feedback techniques?” Some dance programs and institutions such as the Center for Ballet in the Arts at NYU; Whistle (a platform that confronts gender-based violence in dance workspaces); and the National Association of Teachers in Dancing (NATD UK) among others, provide documents outlining practical considerations such as student-teacher boundaries; consent; discrimination; and language for approaching students to give corrections and more. However, skills or guidance for “how to execute tactile feedback” in dance classes are scant. Further, little evidence exists of courses in tactile feedback techniques in dance teacher education programs. When used properly, thoughtfully, and skillfully, tactile feedback techniques can serve as powerful, immediate and sometimes needed pedagogic strategies that can enhance students’ proprioception; body systems awareness (e.g. musculoskeletal and nervous systems); and kinesthetic awareness (e.g. body part initiation/relationships; core support; alignment; and spatial awareness). This 3-hour workshop bridges gaps between theoretical guidelines and dance classroom applications by addressing the following: What is tactile feedback?; How do we identify when tactile feedback may be useful for a dancer?; What specific hand-on cues for tactile feedback can we employ to engage selected anatomical systems?; Where do we apply tactile feedback with a body?; What are issues with student consent for tactile feedback?; What are alternatives to tactile feedback?, and more.Through multi-modal learning based in somatics, Body-mind Centering®, and dance education including: hands-on learning; engaging pertinent anatomical systems; journaling; self-reflecting; sensing; discussing; observing and collaborating, participants gain (1) Foundational knowledge and theory including definitions and purposes of tactile feedback and its roles in dance education; (2) Practical applications and skills such as tangible techniques that engage selected anatomical systems; (3) Observation skills to identify when tactile feedback may be useful to a dancer and where to apply tactile feedback with a body for maximum benefit; (4) Practical approaches to negotiating power dynamics and maintaining professional boundaries; (5) Communication skills for engaging in feedback; and (6) Skills in establishing, asking for, and respecting student consent for tactile feedback, including alternatives when a student declines consent.

Tamojunto": Pedagogy for Longevity in Capoeira

Jackie Beth Shilcutt, Anastasia Adib

The Brazilian art form of capoeira uniquely weaves athleticism and artistry. This session introduces capoeira as a “dance-fight-game” (Capoeira, 2002), showcasing it as a martial art and aesthetic movement practice with its emphasis on kicks, dodges, and transitions. Participants will learn the basic movements,

engage with cultural and historical foundations of the form, connect with its interactive call-and-response elements, explore improvisational qualities, and end with a Q&A. Through guided exploration, participants will experience pedagogical approaches and movement that can strengthen coordination, agility, and spatial awareness as they expand their personal movement vocabulary. Pedagogical insights and practical movement skills can be transferred to participants' studios, personal practices, and classrooms, as they recognize how pedagogical language affects students' clarity and safety in movement. Additionally, participants will expand their movement repertoire and develop a richer awareness of capoeira's cultural and historical context. Open to all levels; no prior experience needed.

Tap Warmups for Every Level and Every Body
Ryan Casey
In 2025, MacArthur Genius Michelle Dorrance wrote that tap "is democratic, inclusive, OF the people, and celebrates individual expression and a great diversity of voices." In this session, we'll explore how we can honor tap's heritage from the very beginning of each class: in our warmups. We'll perform and discuss a variety of warmup exercises that celebrate tap's roots, including its rich musical and cultural traditions, while serving our students and their varying skill levels. Participants will leave with new warmup ideas to help all students, even the most novice in our classrooms, feel that they can participate successfully in joyful rhythm-making from the very beginning of each class.

Teaching Artists as Leaders in Dance Education
Eve Wolff, Felix Pitre, Akemi Kinukawa
How can the expertise of Teaching Artists be harnessed in structured, scaffolded, and administrative roles and frameworks to build Teaching Artist leadership and longevity in dance, arts, and arts education organizations? Teaching Artists (TAs) are an important part of the dance education landscape. Frequently working alongside classroom teachers or afterschool providers, they offer critical access to dance experiences for students and communities, brining dance into schools that lack certified dance teachers, building connections to professional dance performances, and reinforcing the joy of dance as essential to education and wellbeing. Dancing Classrooms, a 31 year old dance education organization, has relied on a TA model to bring social dance education to thousands of young people each year. We've even adapted this model for organizations across the globe, providing dance education to over 750,000 students worldwide. But in recent years we've looked closely at the sustainability of our TA model and asked ourselves, what is a Senior Teaching Artist? Is it an expert teacher or can it be more? Join the Dancing Classrooms Education Team as they share how they tackle Teaching Artist leadership development and support through their STA Model. This panel discussion will highlight ways to harness a teaching artist's expertise in and out of the classrooms, while incorporating administrative responsibilities in order to build leadership capacity and longevity within an arts organization or collaborative team setting. In this session participants will: Learn about the benefits and outcomes of utilizing teaching artist leaders in arts and arts education organizations, Explore tools and activities used to scaffold leadership development (outside of teaching), and Investigate solutions for perceived challenges that arise when transitioning from a teaching artist/instructor

role to an administrative or hybrid admin/instructor, leadership role.

Teaching Ballet in Times of Crisis
Bradford Chin, Alaina V. Wilson, Nancy Dobbs Owen, Marisa Castillo
During this ongoing period of societal tumult and widespread harm, how does one approach the teaching of ballet and its centuries-long history of exclusion? Building on the work many educators have already done to make ballet more inclusive, this moderated panel discussion explores what educators are doing now to address ballet's inescapable politics (of being), foster more inclusive and accessible ballet learning environments, and use ballet as teaching/learning experience that is relevant for our current times of crisis.

Teaching on Purpose
Alexandra Beller
Many dance educators are deeply committed to teaching in ways that reflect their values—care, rigor, inclusion, agency—yet find themselves relying on habits they inherited from their own training or from institutional norms they rarely have time to question. Over time, this gap between intention and practice can create frustration, burnout, or a sense of teaching on autopilot. This interactive 90-minute session offers a structured, reflective framework for examining how teaching habits are formed, what they stabilize, and when they may no longer serve our students or ourselves. Through guided writing, facilitated discussion, and practical reframing tools, participants will identify assumptions embedded in their pedagogy and explore ways to make more intentional choices in real time. Rather than asking educators to "start over" or abandon their training, this session supports a process of pedagogical reinvention—clarifying what needs stability, what needs mobility, and how values can be translated into concrete teaching decisions. The approach is adaptable across K–12, higher education, studio, and community-based contexts, and honors diverse bodies, learning styles, and dance forms. Participants will leave with language, reflection tools, and actionable strategies to support values-aligned teaching that is both rigorous and responsive.

Teaching, Attuning, and Reciprocal Learning
Christie Bondade, Lela Bell Wesley, Lauren Lawshe
Teaching, Attuning, and Reciprocal Learning: A Case Study of Inclusive Community Dance with SMU Students. This panel discussion, co-presented by Christie Bondade, Sara "SK" Kathryn Fetter, Julia deLeon, and Lela Bell Wesley, examines an inclusive, embodied dance case study grounded in more than a decade of sustained partnership. The program was developed in partnership between SMU Meadows Division of Dance, Big Thought Institute, and HPUMC Belong Disability Ministry's Day Program, engaging disabled adults and university dance students. The proposal emerges from a concern about persistent barriers to access in dance education and positions community-engaged practice as integral, rather than supplemental, to artistic training. The panel frames inclusive dance as a generative pedagogical approach that expands notions of technique, virtuosity, and professional preparation. Drawing on qualitative data, teaching observations, participant reflections, and alumni survey responses, presenters will explore how access-centered, relationship-based practices support artistic growth, self-agency, emotional regulation, and meaningful community connection across ability, age, and experience. Panelists will

discuss the reciprocal impact of this work on disabled participants, university dance students as co-teaching artists, and alumni - highlighting shifts in pedagogy, expanded understandings of technique, and the influence of inclusive community engagement on career pathways and civic involvement. The discussion invites dance educators, artists, and researchers to consider inclusive dance not as an accommodation, but as a foundation for artistic, educational, and community transformation, and will include audience dialogue offering practical insights for implementation across educational and community contexts.

The Art of Majorette – Exploring a Curriculum
Dominquie Walters
This experiential workshop invites dance educators into an immersive exploration of Majorette dance from a culturally grounded and pedagogically responsive lens. Rooted in research from my master's thesis, this session examines the evolution of Majorette dance from its baton-centered origins to its current expression within HBCU culture, J-Sette performance practices, and community-based teams. Participants will engage with discussion, scholarship, and embodied practice to better understand how Majorette functions not only as performance, but as a space of identity, empowerment, and cultural ownership among Black dancers. The session begins with a brief overview of the history and development of Majorette and J-Sette styles, referencing multimedia sources such as When the Beat Drops and performance analyses, as well as interview insights from experienced dancers and educators. We will examine how terminology has shifted over time, how movement vocabulary has evolved, and how Majorette work intersects with cultural responsiveness, student-centered instruction, and feminist pedagogy within dance education spaces. Participants will then transition into movement exploration through foundational elements of Majorette technique, including posture, precision, bucking, and stylistic nuances. Movement will be approached through accessible phrasework suitable for secondary and collegiate settings, prioritizing agency, confidence, and cultural context over replication. Together, we will explore how movement instruction can be adapted for diverse classrooms, allowing students to engage with Majorette authentically and respectfully. The session concludes with curriculum application. Attendees will receive a sample lesson sequence and planning prompts that support implementation in their own programs, including strategies for framing cultural context, integrating reflective practice, and fostering inclusive learning environments. A short collaborative discussion will allow educators to share questions, ideas, and considerations for teaching Majorette in ways that honor its history and community significance.Participants will leave with new knowledge, movement tools, and curricular resources that support the integration of Majorette dance into studio and school settings with intention and respect. This session is designed for educators who wish to expand representation within dance curriculum, elevate Black dance forms in academic spaces, and cultivate vibrant, culturally responsive classrooms.

The Big Dare: Risk, Growth Mindset in the Studio
Robert Kleinendorst
This session addresses the trend of physically and artistically confined young dancers through the lense of Paul Taylor's physical style of dance as well as his philosophy of risk taking and "letting go" in dance performance. Through the

synergy of Paul's style and philosophy and my own pedagogical approach, I try to address the question, can we change our students' perception of what success in dance means to them? Not as a career but, moment to moment? Towards this aim, the presenter will detail his experience working with Paul Taylor, what he learned as a mover and an artist, and how he synergizes Taylor's big, bounding, and free movement style as well as his philosophy of risk and failure as well as growth mindset into technique classes through both movement and prompts. This session will offer a combination of information dissemination as well as a brief embodied foray into Taylor's movement style.

The Body as Teacher

Alana Shaw

Add some community crossover magic to your basket. Our curriculum, developed in over 36 years of experience in the field, is enlivening and innovative, bringing awareness, connection, leadership, spontaneity, collaborating and inclusivity to the forefront. Our model reconnects youth to their lives and society, encouraging a collective ethic of caring for self and others. Our programming has a focus on deepening connection and unity through movement and play. Our work centers around the body wisdom – engaging groups in games and movement explorations that draw from the fields of communication theory, somatic and positive psychology, art therapy, performance art and alternative education. Participants will experience the power of our curriculum with Director Alana Shaw and a team of our experienced facilitators. Our innovative training model brings a tool basket of practical exercises for personal growth and professional support.

The Byrd Method: Donald Byrd Repertory Workshop

Derek Crescenti

In this session, we will explore The Byrd Method: Donald Byrd's singular approach to dance/theater—physically demanding and emotionally charged—requiring that artists occupy the space where the classical, contemporary, intuitive, cerebral, visceral, right brain, left brain, control, and abandonment converge. The workshop will center on Mr. Byrd's work A CRUEL NEW WORLD/the new normal. Originally conceptualized in 2003 as a "dystopic vision of life in America post-9/11" comprised of "vast refugee camps of displaced citizens, the result of ongoing terrorist attacks on our homeland," it was revisited in 2013 to depict "citizen detainees" in "an extreme vision of a future America where national security trumps civil liberties and all democratic processes are sacrificed in the name of the security of the state." More than a decade later, we will trace the lineage of the work, physicalize excerpts, and consider its relevance to our lives today. I aim to offer Mr. Byrd's work as a powerful example of dance as commentary, resistance, and action. Donald Byrd's unwavering commitment to creating work that rouses audiences into consciousness offers a resonant model for how art can become a catalyst for reflection and transformation. We will also discuss and share how within our various sectors, we could encourage students' understanding of dance as a social/civic instrument.

The Future of Dance Leadership: A Cross-Generation

Elizabeth Kattner

This panel brings together student leaders and experienced leaders in dance education for a cross-generational conversation about leadership in today's evolving dance landscape. Rather than speaking about one another,

participants will practice a core leadership capacity that is often overlooked but deeply needed: listening to understand. Too often, leadership conversations happen within age or role-based silos, with assumptions made about what others need or value. This session intentionally disrupts that pattern by creating space for leaders across generations—students, faculty, administrators, and directors of organizations—to listen to one another, learn from lived experience, and engage with the collective wisdom in the room. Through dialogue and shared reflection, the panel will explore how perspectives on leadership are shifting, what remains timeless, and how dance educators in both K-12, higher education and the private sector can more effectively meet the needs of today's dance community while shaping the future of the field.

The House Ecosystem: Groove, Footwork, and Flow

Ryan McMullen

House dance is a living ecosystem built on the synergy of rhythm, community, and individual expression. In this high-energy movement session, we explore the foundational elements of House—the Groove (The Jack), Footwork, and Flow (Lofting)—through the lens of regional Philly-style foundations. Moving beyond rote choreography, this workshop focuses on the "connective tissue" between social dance origins and formal studio/academic training. Participants will navigate the intricate syncopations of House footwork and the fluid, floor-oriented transitions of lofting, learning how these elements "orchestrate" a complete dancer. Whether you are looking to diversify your K-12 curriculum or enhance a university-level street dance course, you will depart with a pedagogical toolkit rooted in authentic House culture and the communal spirit of the "Synergy Circle."

The Language of the Senses: Access to Dance

Sandi Stratton-Gonzalez

This experiential workshop addresses the access needs of dance students with a wide range of abilities and disabilities by asking two primary questions: How do sensory needs and sensitivities impact dance learning? How do I integrate sensory based activities in lesson planning? The workshop begins with a presentation on the eight senses and their application to dance class. The experiential portion of the workshop includes a warm up designed around vestibular and tactile exercises; a guided sensory exploration supported by a rich, descriptive narrative; and a collaborative dance making activity utilizing visual image cards and flow maps to sequence material. The final 20 minutes of the session is devoted to small group collaboration and discussion. Participants will create either a warm up, a movement exploration, or a dance making activity that centers the sensory experience.

The Paddle And Roll – a key to Tap Dance Land

Andrew Nemr

Bubba Gaines, a founding member of The Three Dukes and the Copasetics, once described the Paddle And Roll as having everything you need to know about tap dancing. A cornerstone of many tap dance soloists' vocabulary (like Lon Chaney and Carnell Lyons) the Paddle And Roll is a versatile pattern that can be used to teach proprioception, pattern recognition, physical and rhythmic accuracy, and be the basis of a variety of creative expressions in Tap Dance

Land. In this session participants will learn ways to teach the Paddle And Roll and a series of Paddle And Roll progressions that they can take directly into their classroom.

The Power of Audience Psychology & Color Theory

Tiffany White

Tired of seeing your students rely solely on the music to dictate their dance's meaning? Have you ever watched a performance and wondered how to help your students communicate their artistic vision more powerfully? This workshop introduces two powerful tools: Audience Psychology and Color Theory. Just as advertisers use these techniques to influence our emotions and sell products, services, or ideas, we can use them to enhance every aspect of our students' choreography. Imagine your students creating dances where meaning, movement, and music seamlessly align? Learn how to guide them in utilizing Space, Relationship, lighting, and costuming to convey deeper meaning and create a truly unforgettable masterpiece. Whether performing on a stage or in a gymnasium, these principles can transform your dancer's work. You'll leave with practical resources and the confidence to implement these techniques in your own classroom. Through engaging movement exercises, you will also gain a deeper understanding of these concepts and experience firsthand how to apply them to your teaching practices.

The Role of Dance Education in Community College

Heather Dougherty

Dance education exists across a wide range of environments—including independent studios, PK–12 school programs, college and university dance departments, and community-based organizations—yet these spaces often operate in isolation from one another. This separation can limit opportunities for students and reinforce competition rather than collaboration within local dance ecosystems. This proposed presentation is grounded in the question: What might it look like for dance educators across these varied environments to work together for the benefit of their students and their communities? Central to this inquiry are considerations of how cross-sector teaching experiences shape pedagogy, how inclusive and collaborative dance spaces are cultivated, and how educators can intentionally move toward shared investment in student growth. My recent dissertation research on community college dance educators offers critical insight into these questions. The integrated quantitative and qualitative findings from this study revealed four key themes that illuminate the unique role community college dance educators play within the broader dance education landscape. First, these educators occupy a multiplicity of roles both within and beyond their institutions. Many maintain concurrent or previous teaching and leadership experiences in independent studios, PK–12 programs, and four-year colleges, with this cross-sector background deeply informing their pedagogical approaches and professional identities. Second, while educators identify both performance opportunities and somatic practices as transformative for students and essential to persistence, performance is often positioned as a core curricular component, with somatic practices perceived as supplementary despite their educational value. Third, community college dance educators consistently describe their work as extending beyond technical instruction into mentoring that emphasizes transferable life skills. With acute awareness of students' varied academic, economic, and personal needs, these educators prioritize holistic student development and

relationship-building, while recognizing that the effectiveness of mentorship is shaped by institutional conditions and resources. Finally, participants demonstrate multifaceted pedagogical approaches that reflect a "one-size-does-not-fit-all" philosophy. Although full cultural responsiveness was not always realized, educators expressed strong sociocultural awareness and a desire to adapt teaching practices to meet the needs of diverse student populations, often employing individualized instruction and assessment while balancing multiple pedagogical priorities. Taken together, these themes clarify the characteristics, perspectives, and teaching practices of community college dance educators and highlight the distinctive position of dance education within community colleges. Importantly, this research underscores the potential of community college dance educators to function as critical connectors between independent studios, PK–12 schools, and four-year institutions. Their professional versatility and cross-sector experience position them to support continuity for students as they transition between educational systems, transforming fragmented experiences into cohesive developmental pathways. In doing so, these educators also contribute to the validation of dance as a rigorous academic discipline. Because community colleges are often deeply embedded within their local communities, educators can also cultivate partnerships with dance companies, cultural organizations, and community centers, reinforcing reciprocal relationships between institutions and the populations they serve. Educators who have worked across multiple sectors often develop pedagogical flexibility that allows them to respond effectively to diverse learners. By recognizing and supporting this bridging function, community colleges dance educators should recognize their role in facilitating their students' success, strengthening institutional partnerships, and positioning themselves as hubs of accessible, high-quality dance education. Ultimately, teaching dance within the community college context requires adaptability, creativity, and a sustained commitment to equity and inclusion. While challenges such as limited resources, systemic undervaluation of the arts, and wide-ranging student needs persist, these obstacles also invite innovative pedagogy, strategic advocacy, and deeper collaboration across dance education sectors. This proposal builds on these insights to explore how intentional cross-sector collaboration can strengthen dance education, enrich student experiences, and build more connected, inclusive dance communities.

The Synergy of Duncan Dance and Dance Pedagogy

Cynthia Word

We will explore the philosophy and technique of Isadora Duncan (1877-1927), which acknowledges the synergy of the systems within the human body and the synergies with systems of nature. Through the power point lecture, we will track Duncan's influence from early modern dancers, to post moderns, to somatic practitioners. We will see that the threads of her technique can work synergistically with current dance practices. Participants will then move through activities that are typical in a modern dance class/rehearsal (warmups, barre, improvisations, locomotor movements, phrases of movement). However, we will explore them using Duncan principles. We will experience and reflect upon the synergies between Duncan technique and techniques that are currently popular in dance environments. We discuss: How does the synergy of the Duncan practice

with other techniques work together to create a sum that is greater than the parts? Can we encourage a dancing human capable of excellence in the Art of Dance as well as comfort, flow and self-expression?

The Value of Mentorship for Black Ballerinas
Anna Dunn
Practical tips for white ballet teachers. The lack of diversity in the ballet industry is a systemic problem preventing the industry from growing by excluding talent, innovation, and potential audiences. As a teacher leader, I recognize a responsibility to better understand the role that mentorship plays in the lives of my ballerinas and share that understanding with my teacher colleagues. The purpose of this study was to capture the value of the relationship between Black ballet students and a mentor who has navigated the ballet industry as a Black ballerina. Much research has been done in other fields about the relationship of gender and race to the success of mentors to increase student confidence to pursue additional training or a career in certain fields. The purpose of this study was to articulate formally the importance of the relationship between Black ballet students and a mentor who has lived a similar life experience, having navigated the ballet industry as a Black ballerina. This research sought to answer the questions of what value do Black ballet students perceive in having a Black ballerina as a mentor and how white ballet teachers can serve as mentors for Black ballet students. Following a qualitative case study methodology, the results of this study suggested an increased focus on impactful mentoring programs and additional strategies that white ballet educators can employ to better support diverse students.

Transformative Praxis in Dance Education
Dale Schmid, Ann Biddle, Sylvia Henao Bernal, Eto'o Tsana
Moderated by Dr. Dale Schmid, this panel brings together three doctoral students from the EdD Program in Dance Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, Ann Biddle, Sylvia Henao, and Eto'o Tsana, to share pedagogical models shaped by research, practice, and lived experience in the field of dance education. Aligned with the 2026 NDEO National Conference theme, SYNERGY: Uniting to Progress the Field of Dance Education, the session examines how work in K12 settings, private studios, and higher education can advance the field by addressing systemic inequities and supporting teacher well-being. Although each presenter works in a different sector, their approaches are connected by a shared commitment to reflective practice and transformative pedagogy. Ann Biddle's Reflective Pedagogy Lab offers dance educators an embodied, multimodal space for reflection, care, and renewal through guided meditation, writing, poetry improvisation, and collaborative dance-making, grounded in social-emotional learning and culturally sustaining pedagogy. Sylvia Henao's work with Colombian ballet teachers focuses on adult learning and critical self-reflection, supporting teachers as they examine inherited traditions and reconsider their professional identities. Eto'o Tsana's work in higher education centers curriculum as a decolonial practice, inviting students to become active agents of change who question Eurocentric hierarchies through culturally responsive and problem posing approaches. By placing these models in dialogue, the panel illuminates connections across educational contexts—from individual reflection to collective restoration and institutional change. Framing dance as a vital, embodied means of engaging identity and culture, the presenters

model a collaborative approach to collective impact. Together, they demonstrate how practitioner-led scholarly inquiry can be mobilized to disrupt educational barriers and advance more just and equitable dance learning environments. Participants will leave with adaptable frameworks and concrete strategies they can apply in their own classrooms, studios, and programs to foster inclusive, reflective, and sustainable dance education practices.

Trauma-Informed Somatic Regulation for Teachers & Students

Martha Eddy

The body remembers what the mind forgets. Drawing on decades of somatic movement education, where much stress and moments of unresolved trauma occasionally surfaced, Martha Eddy developed various approaches to seeing the markers of trauma and working to not re-trigger difficult situations. She will introduce three protocols for exploring the impact of what she calls “the Continuum of Stress to Trauma” from Dynamic Embodiment® movement therapy — Be as Big as You Are©, 3D Breathing, and Active Witnessing©. Participants will apply these protocols for regulation within Eddy's EGIC model: Express, Ground, Integrate, Communicate©. Active Witnessing reveals stories of how the body and mind perceive micro and macro stressors, injuries, and held wounds. While deepening breath calms the nervous system, "Being as Big as You" allows for identifying feelings and awakens the desire for safety. Trauma can surface as numbing — the body's protection from what feels like too much. Dance is a critical player in somatic regulation: having a full range of dance dynamics in your lesson can provide opportunities to acknowledge feelings, and when taught with compassion shift moods, frees the bodily flow. Practical co-regulation tools help us recognize dysregulation early, respond with care rather than correction, and rebuild a felt sense of bravery in your classroom/studio.

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UnDance: Undergraduate Black & Brown Storytelling

Gabrielle Tull

The session will provide participants with discourse centralized in facilitating and supporting underrepresented dance communities in higher education spaces. The session provides video performance and interview excerpts of undergraduate movement and interdisciplinary research with participant talkback. The works presented in the annual UnDance showcase event demonstrates the impact of establishing an authentic performative experience specific to black and brown dancing bodies. Through faculty facilitation, and conversations with our student populations over the last 4 years, participants will learn more about the insights in providing resources, and academic rigor that impact students’ artistic outlets. The session will highlight, celebrate, and give voice to these untold stories through the lens of choreography, and cross curricular collaborations to further support their dancing communities.

Uniting Dancers with Introductory Movement Games

Emily Enloe

Attendees will learn about the set-up and process of several movement-based games and activities focused on basic human connection and introductions. They will immerse themselves by physically trying out the

student-centered learning process and then discuss their experience with other attendees. The goal is to demonstrate how using movement-based activities can introduce K-12 students to the rules and procedures of a dance class in a non-threatening way and without focusing on any specific dance genre. It also creates an easy way for dancers to begin "dancing" but also connect and communicate with their peers while having fun. By immediately having students moving around in the classroom, we can shed the outdated method of the teacher as the sole authoritarian, standing at the front of the classroom naming rules for students to follow. Rather, students can bring their prior, diverse knowledge to the classroom and learn about their fellow classmates in a less formal or intimidating manner. Additionally, this session aims to show how introducing dance in this way can address diversity and inclusion across multiple dance forms and levels of dancers. Attendees will experience the various activities first-hand, find ways to incorporate them into their own classroom, and conclude with a discussion.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY: 1 RHYTHM , MANY ROOTS.

Vandita Parikh

Indian folk dances are rooted in community, rhythm, and shared experience. Rather than focusing on technique alone, the session centers on process: how folk dance encourages participation, inclusivity, and shared ownership of learning. Participants will experience practical movement phrases, learn adaptable teaching strategies, and explore how these traditions can foster connection and collaboration within dance education. Participants will engage in accessible movement inspired by Indian folk forms and reflect on ways group rhythm, storytelling, and cultural context support inclusive learning environments. Emphasis is placed on practical strategies for honoring tradition while building synergy among dancers and educators.

Unity: Dance Educators as Fulbright Scholars

Yoav Kaddar, Kelly Lester, Susan Bauer

How can international collaboration enhance our vision of dance, enrich our own dance programs, and build more inclusive communities? In this panel presentation, dance educators who have traveled abroad as Fulbright Scholars share their international experiences teaching and collaborating in a broad range of areas, such as dance pedagogy, performance, and arts administration. Fulbright grants provide an inspiring avenue for dancer artists, dance scholars, and dance educators to both contribute their expertise and broaden their own perspectives. In addition to presenting their own work in Guatemala, Indonesia, and France, the panelists will discuss the Fulbright application process and its 'ins and outs', encouraging young scholars and seasoned professionals alike to consider applying to the Fulbright program themselves. Come join us for this panel presentation and learn through discussion, slides, and video 'testimonials' about international collaboration, as you envision your own potential research topic.

Universal Design for Learning in Dance Classrooms

Erin Lane

How do I sustainably teach multiple technique levels in one class on the regular without going insane? Teaching the gifted kids and the kids who need more academic support in the same class feels impossible! How am I supposed to

bridge the variety of international and cultural perspectives that are colliding together in my class? How do I teach my students to balance self-care with actually completing their homework? How do I teach dancers and non-dancers in the same class? Does this student really need all of these accommodations; how can I possibly teach the same class to this student and Cindy Lou Who over there who's IQ is off the charts? If you've ever asked yourself questions like these, this is the session for you! In this session, you'll become familiar with a pedagogical framework called Universal Design for Learning. You'll see examples of it in action in academic dance classroom settings such as dance history, technique class settings, and choreography. You'll learn and brainstorm new pedagogical tools that meet the unique needs of YOUR students no matter how far apart their needs seem to be from each other. Infuse UDL principles into your pedagogical practice today and bear witness to how these small teaching tools make a difference in your classroom immediately!

Unlock The Artist Within: Create, Play, Move (K-5)

Marisa F. Ballaro

At the heart of this session is the conviction that improvisation nurtures student voice, choice, and creativity. Through movement experiences, personal reflection, and group discussion, attendees will leave with practical tools, classroom strategies, and renewed inspiration to create inclusive spaces that honor diversity and unlock the artist within every child. Unlock the Artist Within: Create, Play, Move invites participants to step into the role of student, experiencing four proven improvisational structures—"Shape Show/Shape Swap/Shape Build," "Shape Tag," "Dance Lands," and "What's In Your Kinesphere?" These simple yet sophisticated frameworks allow children to explore movement in ways that are authentic to their own abilities, choices, and voices. Because there is no "right or wrong," improvisation becomes a laboratory for creative ideas where all answers are good answers. Students are encouraged to move within their physical capabilities, take creative risks, and see themselves reflected in the ideas of others. The result is a classroom culture rooted in empathy, respect, and authentic community—one that adapts to those in the room rather than enforcing a prescribed model of learning. One often practiced dance education model - "do as I do" - is characterized by a teacher-centric approach where students follow the teacher's lead and replicate the movements being taught. This singular model can unintentionally limit access, exclude diverse learners, and narrow what counts as "dance." Students may feel they must move like someone else to be successful, leaving little room for individuality, creativity, or confidence. This session offers an alternative: choice-driven improvisation is an inclusive, developmentally responsive, and empowering practice. Simplified but not simple, the structures gradually shift ownership from teacher to student and foster environments where every learner—regardless of background, body type, or ability—can thrive as a dancer.

Unpacking Trauma Through Student Teacher Synergy

Charlotte Lilly Lobben, Madeline J. Harvey

What does trauma-informed pedagogy look like when it is examined from both sides of the dance classroom? This session is structured as an authentic, dialogue facilitated between a dance professor and a third-year university

student, offering a multi-dimensional exploration of how trauma-sensitive teaching practices are enacted, interpreted, and experienced in dance education. Through guided reflections, the presenters examine how trauma can surface across varied instructional contexts and developmental stages, including higher education and studio teaching for adolescents (ages 10–13). Drawing from ballet technique classes, choreography courses, rehearsals, and community-based dance settings, the conversation considers how principles such as transparency, choice, and collaboration manifest differently depending on context. Examples include tactile and verbal feedback in technique classes, consent and privacy in choreographic sharing, and conflict norms and co-creation in rehearsal processes. Presenters share perspectives on trauma-informed education frameworks, neuroscience research, and professional experience in pedagogical ballet practices. Through critical examination of lived experiences, facilitators evaluate the impact of teaching practices on creative growth and agency. Together, the presenters interrogate questions such as: How do educators signal safety and trust in environments shaped by hierarchy and tradition? Where do well-intentioned pedagogical choices fall short when experienced by students? How do power, age, and authority shape students' ability to name or question content? And how can dialogue function as a trauma-informed pedagogical tool? Rather than presenting trauma-informed pedagogy as a checklist of strategies, this session frames it as an ongoing relational practice grounded in listening, transparency, and mutual responsibility. Audience members are invited into the conversation through structured reflection prompts and facilitated Q&A, encouraging participants to connect conversations to their own teaching contexts. The session foregrounds language use, feedback practices, power dynamics, and classroom structure rather than physical movement, making it accessible to participants across abilities, roles, and instructional environments. This session is designed for dance educators seeking to engage in trauma-informed pedagogy through critical reflection, student-centered learning, and ethical teaching practice.

Urgent Questions- Bill T. Jones in Trying Times
Mary Harding

"I've never made what I would consider overtly political statements in my work, any statements I made were the result of my answering urgent questions for myself." Bill T. Jones. The Advocate 1999, 2017. What urgent questions do I have as a dance educator in Minneapolis in January, 2026? How do I balance the needs of my students for ritual and routine, physical practice, desire to create and the overwhelming stress of our immediate situation? I look to the past as I support students who imagine a future. What urgent questions do my students have as they grapple with the current situation in their schools and communities? How can I create a space and tools for students to explore hard questions or find relief? This session will demonstrate a curriculum designed to introduce the work of Bill T. Jones to dance and theater students in an arts high school. The curriculum blends Create, Perform, Respond and Connect standards to allow dance students to learn about dance history, to practice dance structures, to question their personal journeys and to interrogate their reasons for making. In a difficult time in our state, this broad, historic focus allows students to reflect on urgent questions from makers in our history. Learning the background of "D-Man in the Waters" can

allow students to see the personal in the historical. Analyzing gestures in “Spring Awakening” can open theater students to new possibilities for monologues and scene work. Centering the curriculum on Bill T. Jones’ quote allows students to decide on their own urgent questions, whether it be trust, interpersonal or something more global. Participants will experience a shortened version of the curriculum emphasizing a variety of instructional techniques. Participants will physically practice several choreographic structures and improvisational prompts to understand the Bill T. Jones choreographic world. Using these tools, participants will create and share movement based on their own urgent questions. Finally, participants will reflect on the curriculum and will ponder how this framework can be extended for their populations. When we look back, we see the clarity of the work and the process. The challenge is, when you are in the moment, the answers are not always clear. Having been a part of Bill ’s work in the turbulent 1980’s, I have experienced this method in action. Hopefully, this process gives students tools and permission to find a grounding in this time.

V

Vibe Code the Dance: Black Movement Intelligence

Laurie Taylor

In technology culture, vibe coding refers to a responsive approach to building systems that prioritizes pattern recognition and continuous adjustment over rigid pre-planning. Decisions are made in real time, allowing structure to remain flexible under changing conditions. This session applies the concept of vibe coding to African diaspora dance, where similar processes have long shaped movement practice in the traditional and contemporary dance sense. In these forms, dancers continuously interpret rhythm, spatial relationships, musical nuance, and social exchange to make precise movement decisions in the moment. Many African diaspora/black dances (I will use interchangeably for our intent and purposes) function as adaptive systems, guided by shared vocabulary and rhythmic logic while remaining open to variation and change. Participants will explore African diaspora dance as a form of adaptive movement intelligence rooted in kinesthetic awareness and movement-based cognition. Improvisation within these traditions is not unstructured; it is governed by timing, musical conversation, and collective calibration. This framework helps explain why these dances remain innovative across generations and why they readily respond to new music, spaces, and cultural contexts without losing stylistic integrity. The presentation challenges dominant Western dance education models that emphasize replication, linear progression, and external correction. In contrast, African diaspora dance offers a pedagogical model centered on listening, pattern recognition, feedback loops, and shared authorship. These practices cultivate dancers who are musically fluent, spatially responsive, and capable of creative leadership in unpredictable performance environments.

Vulnerability as Pedagogy: Moving Together

Erika Julian

Vulnerability is an unavoidable part of dance education, yet it is often left unexamined as a teaching strategy. This session explores how intentional, low-stakes movement practices can function as pedagogical tools that build trust, increase participation, and foster inclusive learning environments across dance contexts.

The presentation centers on a simple but deliberate classroom practice: beginning classes—both studio and lecture-based—with shared, playful movement. Over the past academic year, more than 600 students were surveyed regarding this approach, with 98% reporting that moving together in a silly, non-technical way made classes easier to show up for, increased their willingness to participate, and created a sense of collective belonging before instruction began. While this practice originated in a university setting, the session expands beyond a single context to examine how vulnerability operates across dance environments, including K–12 programs, private studios, university departments, and community-based classes. Attendees will explore how collaboration between these sectors can benefit students and communities, and how educators' relationships with one another directly shape the inclusivity of the spaces they create. This session also addresses how vulnerability supports access for dancers with disabilities, dancers with varied training backgrounds, and students navigating anxiety, perfectionism, or fear of failure. By designing movement experiences that emphasize participation over performance, educators can create classrooms where all students are able to engage meaningfully. The session will blend brief movement experiences, data presentation, guided reflection, and discussion. Participants will leave with concrete strategies for integrating vulnerability into their own teaching practices, as well as questions to consider when building collaborative, inclusive dance communities. The session is designed for educators working across sectors who are interested in strengthening student engagement, fostering connection, and reimagining vulnerability as a strength rather than a risk in dance education.

W

Welcoming All: Dance as a Space of Belonging
Christine Rudy-Reed, Abigail F. Agresta-Stratton
How can we intentionally design dance learning experiences that honor the unique identities, strengths, and lived experiences each student brings? Grounded in the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, this experiential workshop explores how dance educators can design for multiple means of engagement by intentionally welcoming students' diverse interests, identities, and experiences. Centering the UDL guideline Welcoming Interests and Identities, we will explore how to cultivate dance environments where all students – across backgrounds, experiences, and abilities – are seen, celebrated, and able to thrive. Participants will engage in active and embodied learning designed to welcome all movers, alongside an exploration of the UDL framework, principles, and guidelines and their practical application in dance education. Educators will collaborate to examine and develop strategies that intentionally welcome, affirm, and sustain students' varying identities in their own teaching contexts. Through practical tools, reflection, and sharing, participants will leave with actionable strategies to reduce barriers, expand engagement, and support the success of all dancers.This session invites dance educators to move beyond inclusion as access alone and toward inclusion as belonging.

What is the Role of AI in Dance Teaching Practice?
Kristin Blatzheim, Betsy Maloney Leaf
Because AI directly impacts teaching, including issues of equity and career readiness, our

session aims to: 1) examine practical approaches to enlivening dance teaching using AI tools, including assessment, 2) reflect upon and wrestle with the role of AI in one's dance teaching practice, and 3) consider tensions around school policies regarding AI in both K-12 and higher education contexts. Session attendees will hear the perspectives of two dance educators who utilize AI to varying degrees in their teaching practice and curriculum. A high school dance teacher will describe how she uses AI to brainstorm new assessments, add learning targets to curricular plans, and create shells of usable documents for the dance classroom. A dance teacher trainer working in higher education will describe how she coaches her preservice dance teachers to consider the ethical implications of AI as part of their teaching philosophy while understanding how it can inform curriculum development. Both educators will provide concrete examples of how they've navigated successes and challenges when using AI in their classrooms.

What to Publish?: Dance Education in Practice
Elizabeth McPherson, Miriam G. Giguere
Facilitators will guide participants through writing and submitting an article to the NDEO journal, Dance Education in Practice (DEiP). We will walk participants through how to use Scholar One, the online platform for authors to submit their work to DEiP. Facilitators will also demystify the editorial process that the DEIP editors, writing mentors, and publisher (Taylor and Francis) follow to move the article from initial draft to publication in the journal. In small groups, attendees will work on developing article ideas. There will be ample time for questions. The session benefits NDEO members by providing them with practical ways to organize their ideas about their practice as dance teachers for publication in DEiP or other journals.

What's Been Werking: Street Dance Education
Paris Davison, Kelli Forman, Charles Parks
Creative Netwerk serves over 10,000 youth annually across 28 cities through culturally rooted street dance and DJ education. This session explores synergy in action: cross sector, cross city, cross generational collaboration that bridges institutions and community while remaining culturally grounded and standards aligned. Panelists share what has been working as we expand partnerships with school districts, universities, libraries, community centers, and civic leaders without diluting lineage or cultural integrity. Participants will gain insight into curriculum alignment, advocacy strategies, youth to teacher leadership pipelines, and documenting street dance history in accountable partnership with archival institutions. Attendees will leave with practical tools for building sustainable, equity driven programs that strengthen community health through dance and music culture.

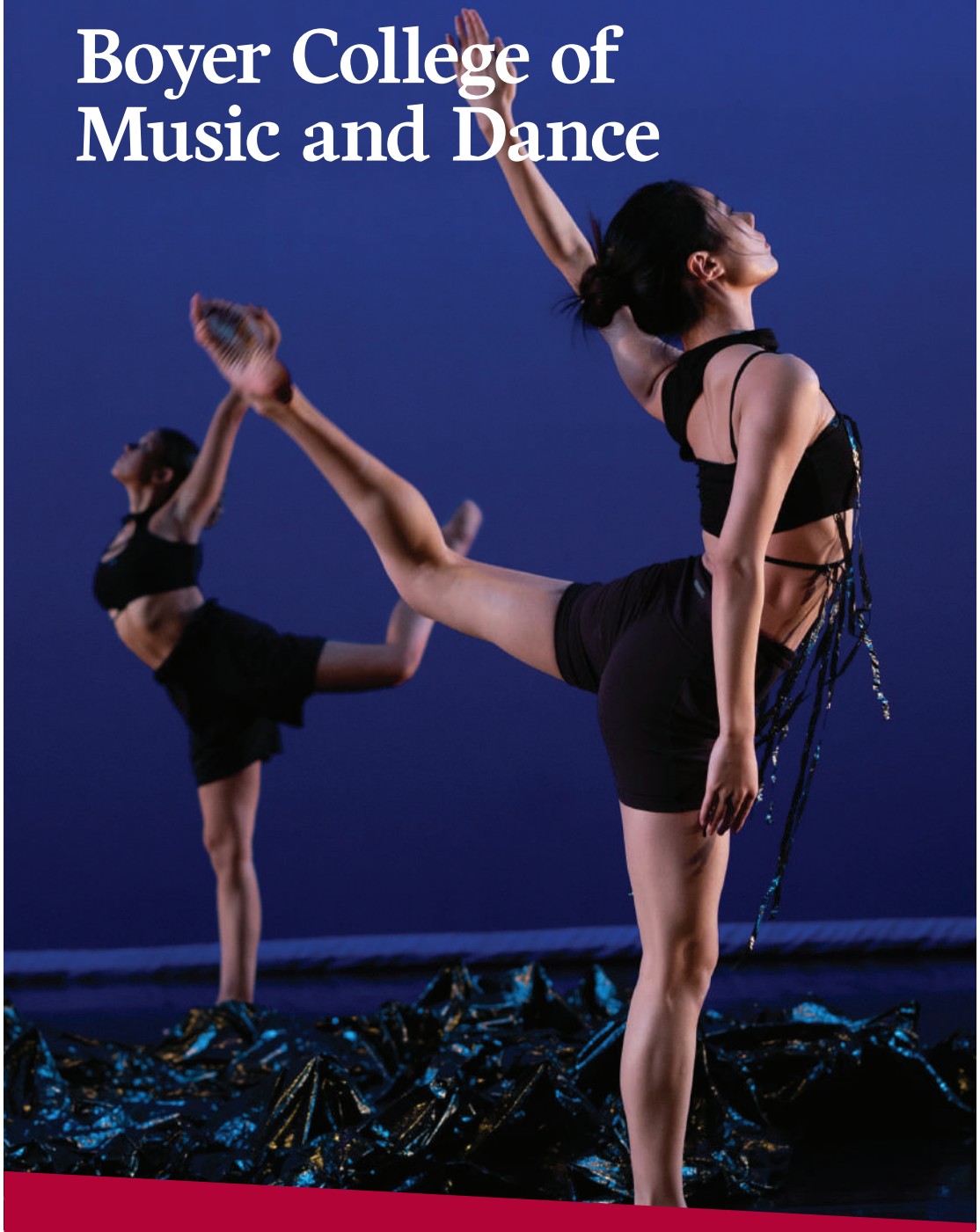
Y

Your Leadership Voice: Finding + Amplifying It
Yoav Kaddar, Deborah Damast, Elizabeth Kattner
SYNERGY calls us to unite in order to progress the field of dance education. But meaningful unity does not require sameness. It requires leaders who are clear in their voice, grounded in their values, and skilled in how they collaborate across sectors and generations. This full-day pre-conference intensive invites multi-generational dance leaders to clarify their unique leadership voice and strengthen the tools needed to sustain and amplify it. Through

reflection, embodied exploration, leadership skill-building, and facilitated “Solution Rooms,” participants will connect personal insight to collective action. Throughout the day, we will explore leadership as a verb—a way of being that is not tied to title, but expressed through how we collaborate, communicate, and partner with those around us. Participants will identify the qualities and habits that shape impactful dance leaders and practice practical tools such as coaching-based listening, values-aligned decision-making, and collaborative problem-solving. They will leave with a refined personal Leadership Voice Statement, concrete next steps for advancing their work, and a clear intention for how they will engage the conference experience. Dance is our shared language. Leadership is how we shape its future.**Session timeline will be available to participants closer to the date.



Boyer College of Music and Dance



GRADUATE DANCE

Temple University
Center for the Performing and Cinematic Arts

Presenter Biographies

*If a presenter's biography is missing, please check their listing in the conference app. Presenter biographies are listed alphabetically by **last name**.*

A

Adrienne Abdus-Salaam is a native of Atlanta, GA. She is well versed in Mojah, Horton technique, West African and Brazilian dance. Adrienne has been dancing professionally for 21 years and teaching for 17. Adrienne began her dance training at Total Dance/Dancical Productions under the tutelage of Terrie "Ajile" Axam and Dawn Axam. She is a graduate from Tri-Cities High School, received her Bachelors of Fine Arts in Dance from the University of the Arts, her Master's in Education specializing in Dance from Temple University, her Certificate of Contemporary Ghanaian Dance from The University of Ghana and she studied extensively with Escola de Danca and Ballet Folklorico in Bahia, Brazil. Adrienne has done company work with Total Dance/Dancical Productions, Freddie Hendricks Youth Ensemble of Atlanta, Alo Brasil, Kulu Mele, Kariamu & Company and Urban Bush Women. Adrienne has performed and studied in China, South Africa, The Netherlands, Cuba, Brazil, West Africa and the United Kingdom. In the summer of 2019, she traveled to Tanzania as a Full bright – Hays Fellow. She has worked as a Professor of Dance at The University of the Arts and Temple University. She was previously a teaching artist for Delaware, New Jersey & Pennsylvania Council of the Arts in Education. Adrienne was the Director of Dance at Tri-Cities High School and New Manchester High School. She is currently the Dance/Theater Fine Arts Instructional Specialist for Clayton County Public Schools.

Anastasia (Anya) Adib is a Utah-based dancer and choreographer with a Bachelor of Science in Dance. In her time at Utah Tech University, Anya focused on modern dance and ballet while branching out to new styles such as ballroom and aerial dance. She toured with the Utah Tech ballroom company through schools and universities across Brazil, additionally returning there for capoeira research in the summer of 2025. Through the Trailblazer Child and Youth Program, Anya interned at a U.S Naval Air Station in Sicily, Italy, where she blended her love for dance and teaching by developing an informal acro camp. Anya has performed with the Saint George Dance Company since 2024 and also teaches at On Stage Dance Studio. Her choreographic research piece entitled Faded Echoes won the 2024 Utah Tech "Research in a Minute" Award for her innovative study of stage lighting effects. Faded Echoes was also selected for adjudication at the High Desert regional American College Dance Association as well as the Red Rock Dance Festival in Summer 2025. Additionally, Anya continues to collaborate with Dr. Jackie Beth Shilcutt on a research project investigating pedagogical trends and injury prevention in Capoeira.

Abigail F. Agresta-Stratton earned a MA in Dance Education from New York University's Steinhardt School and is a Registered Dance Educator. Abigail has taught dance in many public and private schools and studios for over thirty years (twenty nine years in PK-12) and has created and implemented multi-faceted dance curricula. Abigail is a graduate of Dance Education Laboratory and has been a member of the New York City Department of Education Blueprint Writing Committee, Project Manager of the NYCDOE Dance Curriculum Planning Committee, a scorer for the NYS Dance Content Specialty Test, Chair of the NYC Dance Educators

/UFT, Secretary of the NYS Dance Education Association, and President of NYSDEA Abigail has served as the moderator of the National Dance Education Organization's K–12 Forum and Chair of the PK-12 Mentorship Committee. In October 2012, she was awarded the Presidential Service Award by NYSDEA for her dedication to the advancement of dance education. In August 2013, Abigail was honored at the Dance Teacher Magazine Summit as the 2013 K–12 Awardee and was recognized for her commitment and accomplishments in dance education and advocacy for dance. In 2018, Abigail was recognized by the Executive Director of NDEO, and in 2021 she was also acknowledged by NDEO's President. Currently, Abigail is on NDEO's Advisory Council representing Mentorship and is Co-Chair of NDEO's PK-12 Mentorship Program. Abigail currently lives on Long Island with her husband and two children and teaches in the Bronx. A "body as mind" approach to performance, creating work, and teaching. Born in Tsévié, Togo and raised between Togo, Ithaca, New York, and Flint, Michigan, Ntifafa began her formal dance training in Flint, Michigan through a youth ballet company. After receiving her Bachelors of Arts in Dance from Grand Valley State University, Ntifafa enrolled as an independent study student at the Alvin Ailey School of dance. While there, she was introduced to traditional Guinean and Senegalese dance forms, molding her choice of study for the next ten years.

Ana Lopes Arechiga is originally from Mexico and has a BA in Contemporary Dance and Psychology, having graduated with honors Summa Cum Laude in Psychology, Magna Cum Laude in Dance from the University of New Mexico. She apprenticed for Kamea Dance Company in Israel in 2014. She joined Keshet Dance Company as a Company Dancer in 2016 and has continued dancing with Keshet ever since. She has also danced for the Jewell and Company, Blythe Eden Dance Company, J. Garcia Dance Company, lisa nevada dance, and Esteban Garza Dance Company, just to name a few. She has been an adjunct faculty at UNM in the Theater & Dance Department since 2021. She has been part of Keshet's team since 2014, in 2020 her role expanded to become a part of Keshet's leadership team. As Director of Programming and Engagement, Ana utilizes her artistic lens to inform her leadership in the areas of strategic planning, fundraising, organizational management, program and staff development.

Ruth K. Arena is an Adjunct Lecturer at Le Moyne College, where she was recognized as the 2021 Outstanding Part-Time Faculty Member of the Year, and on faculty at The Ballet & Dance Center (BDC). Ruth holds a BFA in Dance from the University of Arizona and a MA in Teaching Artistry from Wayne State University. She studied on scholarship at the Paul Taylor Dance Company School, and performed with Dzul Dance in New York City. Her choreography has been presented at the Syracuse Fringe Festival, in Le Moyne Theatre Department productions, and with BDC including in concert with the local symphony orchestra. Ruth is the author of Asking Evolving Questions to De-center Whiteness in the Dance Studio, published in the journal Dance Education in Practice.

Jody Gottfried Arnhold, (MA, CMA) dance educator, advocate, and founder of Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) 92NY. Arnhold's 25-year tenure teaching dance in NYC public schools has been the catalyst for her visionary support of dance education. Her contributions to dance in higher education have created

unparalleled opportunities for dance to be taught, researched, measured, and analyzed - providing substantial evidence that dance is essential to every child's education. She supports New York City Public Schools dance programs and created the Arnhold Graduate Dance Education Program at Hunter College. Arnhold's founding and visionary support for the Doctorate in Dance Education and the Arnhold Institute for Dance Education Research, Policy & Leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University is generating valuable thought leadership for dance education in public policy. She is Executive Producer of documentaries PS DANCE! Dance Education in Public Schools and PS DANCE! The Next Generation, raising awareness for her mission - Dance for Every Child. Arnhold has received honorary doctorate degrees from The Juilliard School and Hunter College, as well as the 2024 Medal for Distinguished Service, Teachers College, Columbia University's highest honor.

B

Chinmayee Balabhadrapatruni holds a Master's degree in Kuchipudi from Aria University, works as a teaching artist with Kalamandapam, and a recent member of the Aseemkala Initiative, an organization that integrates dance with narrative medicine. As a Kuchipudi practitioner, she bridges classical Indian dance tradition with contemporary social justice themes, creating accessible pathways for diverse learners to engage with this underrepresented art form. Chinmayee's teaching practice spans dance studios and collaborative partnerships with K-12 schools and environmental organizations, embodying cross-sector collaboration central to dance education equity. She specializes in adapting classical Indian dance pedagogy for non-specialist audiences, developing modified approaches that honor the art form's hereditary lineage while making it accessible to students of all backgrounds and abilities. Through work with Aseemkala Initiative, Chinmayee explores how movement-based storytelling helps communities process complex social issues including environmental crisis, health narratives, and cultural identity. Her teaching centers cultural responsiveness, explicitly acknowledging the hereditary dancers whose artistry shaped Kuchipudi while working to dismantle barriers that have kept classical Indian dance at the margins of American dance education. Chinmayee's pedagogical approach emphasizes collaboration over competition, demonstrating how learning from diverse dance traditions strengthens the entire dance education ecosystem.

Marisa F. Ballaro - A proud Buffalo, NY native, Marisa F. Ballaro is a curious learner and avid community builder. She received her MFA in Dance from Montclair State University (June ‘22) and was selected as Convocation Speaker for the College of the Arts. A summa cum laude graduate of SUNY Brockport (Dance; Interdisciplinary Arts for Children; Honors) she received the Marion Schrank Student Leadership Award and the Outstanding Scholar in the School of Arts & Performance. Marisa is on faculty at The Brearley School (NYC;) she taught at the New York State Summer School of the Arts and as a master coach with the American Dance Legacy Initiative. She was invited to train in Barcelona, Spain (April '22) becoming a certified Level 1 Simonson Teacher. Marisa is Founding Artistic Director of NYC-based Ballaro Dance.

Charlotte Bariteau (she/her) is a dance educator, artist, and scholar based in Louisville, KY. She graduated from Western Kentucky University and the Mahurin Honors College in 2025 with a BA in dance and public relations. At WKU, she developed a passion for jazz dance and academia, completing her senior honors thesis, The Jazz Choreographer's Dilemma, which was recognized as the creative experience of the year for the Mahurin Honors College in 2025. She presented her original research involving her experiences with jazz dance and its history as an undergraduate student at NDEO conferences in 2023 and 2025. Charlotte currently works as a dance instructor and choreographer, primarily in studio settings across Kentucky. Through her work, she aims to highlight the possibilities dance offers beyond performance by delving into the rich, often complicated histories beneath it.

Susan Bauer, MFA, MSME/T, RSDE is a dance/somatic educator, founder of Embodiment in Education™, and author of The Embodied Teen: A Somatic Curriculum for Teaching Body-Mind Awareness, Kinesthetic Intelligence, and Social and Emotional Skills. She has taught for over three decades in the U.S and Asia, informed by her extensive background in dance, Body-Mind Centering®, and Authentic Movement. Susan offers an Embodiment in Education Teacher Training Certification Program for professionals and has a private practice as a Registered Somatic Movement Therapist. She has served on the Board of Directors of ISMETA and holds an MFA from the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA and an MA in Dance and Movement Studies from Wesleyan University. www.susanbauer.com

Rose Pasquarello Beauchamp (CLMA, MFA) — dancer, educator, and activist — centers her research in somatics, social justice, dance as change agent and the embodiment of activism. Her choreographic work — known for integrating dance, theater, design and media — has been featured internationally for the past 18 years. She has been selected for residencies and projects including the NYS Dance Force Western NY Choreographers' Initiative. Rose co-founded Artists Coalition for Change Together (ACCT), an organization active from 2016-2020, as a way to engage dancer-citizens in Rochester. She has received multiple grants from the Center for Community Engagement and serves as a Faculty Fellow with a focus on creative work in community-engaged settings. Rose has studied somatics and social justice for 20 years and holds a certificate of completion in Somatic and Social Justice. As of late, her creative work has centered on reconnecting to invisible histories through site specific work and engaging in climate change initiatives through embodied practice. Rose continues to perform and present her creative research internationally with a focus on dance as an agent of change.

Robin Becker, MA, RSME, RSMT, is an internationally recognized teacher, dancer, choreographer, and Continuum Teacher. Robin has taught on the faculty of Hofstra University since 1989, and has also served on the faculties of ABT, the Fiorello Laguardia HS of Performing Arts, Kripalu, the Omega Institute, the Alvin Ailey Center, and Princeton Ballet Society, Robin founded Robin Becker Dance in 1987. The company received two NEA awards to bring Robin's recent project, Into Sunlight, to military centers across the country. A documentary film about Into Sunlight premiered at the Lincoln Center Dance on Camera Film Festival. In Jan

2026, her company participated in a citywide virtual professional development day with the NYC Department of Education to introduce the curriculum based upon Into Sunlight written by dance educator Ann Biddle. Robin's work weaves together her lifelong experience in dance with her 35-years of experience in Continuum, an innovative field of somatic education. www.RobinBeckerDance.org

Alexandra Beller (MFA, CMA), Artistic Director of Alexandra Beller/Dances (2002-present) was a Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Dance Company member from 1995-2001. Alexandra created 40 Dance Theatre works in Korea, Hong Kong, Oslo, Cyprus, and US. University work throughout the US includes Barnard, SUNY Purchase, Rutgers, Princeton, UCSB, U of MI (Ann Arbor), and The New School. Theater Credits: Off Broadway: Sense and Sensibility (Folger Shakespeare, A.R.T., Portland Center Stage), (Helen Hayes Award, Lortel Nomination), The Mad Ones, How to transcend a happy marriage (Lincoln Center Theatre), Regional: Two Gentlemen of Verona and As You Like It (Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, Folger Shakespeare), The Young Ladies of… (Taylor Mac), Antonio's Song (Milwaukee Rep, Goodman), Fandango for Butterflies (and Coyotes) (La MaMa, La Jolla), Directing: Macbeth (Theater Row), A Midsummer Night's Dream (92Y). She taught at Princeton 2015-2022 and is faculty at Laban Institute for Movement Studies, HB Studios, Gibney Dance Center. She teaches residencies and master classes at Universities internationally. She has two books under contract: The Embodied Conductor: A Somatic Approach to Conducting with Laban and Bartenieff (Meredith Music, December 2025), and The Anatomy of Art: Unlocking the Creative Process for Theater and Dance (Bloomsbury, May 2026).

Lela Bell Wesley, has been a valued member of the Big Thought community for many years serving in many roles including Teaching Artist, Instructional Partner and Professional Development Manager, among others. Lela's professional experience spans the spectrum, both in-school and out-of-school, including Montessori schools, traditional public education and higher education. Lela has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Master of Science in Counseling, her Teaching Certificate (EC-12 Physical Education, 6-12 Dance), and her Principal Certification. In the professional dance community, Lela has worked as a professional dancer and choreographer. In addition to being with Beckles Dancing Company for over twenty-five years with hundreds of performances, Lela has also appeared in operas, film, and commercials.
As Sr Director of Big Thought Institute, Lela is responsible for leading the strategy and implementation of all components of Big Thought's adult training and coaching for staff in Big Thought Direct-to-Youth Programs, for partner agencies in Big Thought Learning Systems, and for clients of Big Thought Institute. This position ensures that there is high-quality professional learning infrastructure and content to properly support the continual growth of adults who are working to fulfill this vision, in both in-person training and distance learning.

Peter J. Bennett - Passionate about jazz dance's history and its many styles, Peter J. Bennett holds a Master of Fine Arts in Contemporary Dance from the University of New Mexico and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre from Niagara University. He is also a Level 3 Certified Teacher in Performing Arts and English Language Arts in New Mexico. Bennett has worked extensively in concert dance and musical theatre. As a performer, he has danced in works by renowned

choreographers including Robert Battle ("Battleworks Étude"), Erika Pujic ("Forces"), Dana Tai Soon Burgess ("Leaving Pusan"), Lorie House ("A Report"), and Michael Bennett ("A Chorus Line").Bennett currently leads the Musical Theatre program at the Public Academy for Performing Arts in Albuquerque, NM. He teaches jazz dance at all levels and has received recognition for his work, including an Enchantment Award for Best Production of a Musical. As a pedagogue, Bennett is committed to sharing his love for jazz dance and its rich cultural history with his students, inspiring them to connect with both its traditions and innovations.

Stephanie Bergen has been teaching dance since establishing the dance department at P.S./I.S. 48 in Staten Island, New York in 2021. She holds a B.S.Ed. in Dance Education and an M.S.Ed. in Special Education. Stephanie teaches students from Pre-K through 8th grade in general education, inclusion, and self-contained special education classes. In addition to her public school work, she teaches at a private dance studio for dancers ages 8–18, further developing her experience with a wide range of ages and abilities. She has been attending NDEO conferences since 2018, beginning as an undergraduate at Hofstra University, and continues to grow an inclusive, engaging, and creative dance program that emphasize access, social-emotional learning, and student agency. Her work focuses on building meaningful connections between students of all abilities through movement, mindfulness, and collaboration, and she regularly partners with educators to expand opportunities for all students.

Ann Biddle M.A., Dance Education, Columbia University, B.A., English, Kenyon College and Fulbright Scholar. Ms. Biddle has been a dance educator, staff developer, curriculum consultant, writer and choreographer for the past 35 years. DEL Founding Faculty, Director of the DEL Institute, and Director of DEL at Jacob's Pillow, Ms. Biddle has trained thousands of dance educators over the years. Ms. Biddle is currently a dance Lecturer at UMASS/Amherst and has taught residencies at Kenyon College, Skidmore College, Ball State University, Colorado State University and Mt. Holyoke College. Ms. Biddle's published dance curricula include New York Export: Opus Jazz, Jerome Robbins: The Essence of Cool, Doug Varone and Brenda Angiel's Aerial collaboration, Dances for iPhone film series, Wonderdance, Dance Making & Langston Hughes Poetry, The Essence of Pearl Primus, Reimagining D-Man in the Water and Into Sunlight. Ms. Biddle has designed and taught multiple courses for DEL including Foundations in Dance Education, DEL Essentials, Planet Dance, Dancing in Early Childhood, Dance and Nature, Teaching from Transformation to Inspiration (Tina Curran), Dance and Literacy (Barbara Bashaw), Teaching Dance Technique, DEL: The Next Generation, the DEL Facilitators Training Program, Dance for Social Change, Tracing Footsteps, DELving into Dance History, Inspiration to Design: Lesson and Curriculum Planning series at Jacob's Pillow and the DEL Essentials OPDI course for NDEO. Ms. Biddle is a doctoral student in the EdD program in Dance Education at Teacher's College, Columbia University. Her research interests include teacher education and preparation in K-12, transformative adult learning and leadership, educational mentoring and coaching, and dance and social justice. The recent documentary film PS Dance! The Next Generation features her dance mentoring program based in Western Massachusetts.

DeAngelo Blanchard - Ohioan DeAngelo Blanchard is a dance artist and educator and currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Professional Practice in Dance & Dance Education at Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. He holds both a MSEd in Educational Leadership & a MA in Dance Education from Hunter College as a Lincoln Center Scholar. In 2015, he founded the dance program at Bronxdale High School in the Bronx, NY. Blanchard trained pre-professionally at BalletMet Dance Academy, with the Thiossane West African Dance Institute and continued his training at The Ohio State University, receiving a BFA in Dance and a minor in Exercise Science. He also trained at the American Dance Festival, Henny Jurri's Studios, The Ailey School and ImPulsTanz. Blanchard has performed works by Bill T. Jones, John Jasperse Projects, Earl Mosley, Brooklyn Academy of Music's Dance Africa, and has toured nationally and internationally.

Kristin Blatzheim holds a Bachelor of Arts in Dance from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, a Master of Education in Professional Studies from the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities, and a Minnesota K–12 Dance Teaching License. She has more than 20 years of experience teaching ballet, jazz, tap, modern, improvisation, and composition in public high schools. Kristin has served as the dance teacher at Apple Valley High School since 2012. In 2021, she expanded dance programming to a district middle school and continues to work toward broadening access to dance education across additional middle schools. Her experience in public education has also included roles as a theater teacher, educational assistant, AVID 11 teacher, yearbook advisor, and currently as a Digital Resource Teacher (DRT), where she supports educational technology integration and provides Schoology and Campus support. Kristin is committed to making dance accessible and meaningful for students of all backgrounds and abilities. Her teaching emphasizes strong technique, dance history, real-world applications, and performance opportunities, while encouraging students to explore movement in ways that reflect their individual identities. She values learning alongside her students and believes in a classroom environment where growth is mutual and ongoing.

Whitney Bleick is a fourth year student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison pursuing a dual degree in dance and elementary education, and a certificate in dance education. Whitney's passions lie in both dance and education, so discovering how the two intersect is at the forefront of her aspirations. Whitney has performed and presented work in numerous dance concerts at UW-Madison, most notably in the 2024 and 2025 research concerts of Professor Jin-Wen Yu. Currently, she works with the UW Dance Exchange, teaching dance at public schools and community centers across the Madison area. She has performed and presented work at the 2025 and 2026 ACDA North Central Conference. In 2024, Whitney attended the Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) in New York City as an Arnhold Summer Fellow. It was at DEL where she truly realized her passion for dance education for every child. Upon graduation in 2027, Whitney will be a part of the first cohort to graduate with a license in dance education from the state of Wisconsin. As she finishes her undergraduate degree, Whitney hopes to continue to perform, choreograph, and discover who she is as an educator.

Christie Bondade [bOHn-da-/dAY/] is a dance artist and educator whose work has been presented nationally and internationally. She is

currently in a post-graduate research cohort – Embodied Neurobiology – for Alternate Route Dance/Movement Therapy. She earned an MFA in choreography from the California Institute of the Arts, Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance. She earned her BA in dance with a focus in choreography from Texas Woman's University. Her creative and pedagogical research centers around dance movement therapy as a vehicle for critical dance pedagogy and embodied exploration; care for the whole person with unconditional positive regard; and promoting community engagement through the arts. Christie is on faculty at Southern Methodist University as a Visiting Professor of Practice. She collaborates with Big Thought and Highland Park United Methodist Church teaching dance classes to the community. Christie serves on the NDEO Dance and Disability Committee aiming to make dance education and experiences more accessible. Christie has performed works by renowned choreographers Robert Battle, Doug Elkins, Michael Foley, Sarah Gamblin, Adam Hougland, Larry Keigwin, John Mead, Luis Montero and Max Stone. Her artistic work is deeply rooted in collaboration and improvisation while exploring community, perspective, identity, and use of technology. Some of her noted commissioned solos are with Mary Williford-Shade, Megan Yankee, L. Brooke Schlecte and Andrew Wojtal (Princess Grace Award Recipient). Artistic residencies and performances include Feldstärke International, Rogue Festival, 254 Dance Fest, American Dance Festival, American College Dance Festival, Texas Dance Improvisation Festival, Exchange Dance Festival, Bayimba International Festival, Out of the Loop Festival, Oklahoma Contemporary Dance Festival, Eastfield College, Texas Tech University and Muscle Memory Dance Theatre. Christie has served on faculty at the University of North Texas, Texas Woman's University, Collin College, Eastfield College and Richland College. She holds her 200hr RYT Yoga Certification and is registered through Yoga Alliance. She served as Advertising Manager, Event Coordinator, and Interim Executive Director for the Dance Council of North Texas, a nonprofit arts organization that has served North Texas dancers for over 30 years. In addition, she creates choreography and performances through collaboration with interdisciplinary artists, and has developed free programs for the Dallas by engaging with the community through the therapeutic arts.

Liz Borromeo began training in ballet with Irina "Era" Wohner in Virginia and the Bella Ruska Ballet School in Rota, Spain. She continued at Old Dominion University, North Carolina Dance Force and The College of William & Mary. While at W&M, she helped design outreach programs for public schools in Williamsburg, Virginia with the Multicultural Performing Arts Society and was a choreographer and performer in the dance company Orchesis. Liz introduced Modern Dance to studios in Yakima, WA and she served as the Children's, Modern and Adult Divisions Director at Columbia Dance in Vancouver from 2003-2015. She continued her studies exploring Concept-Based dance curricula taught at the Creative Dance Center in Seattle, WA under Anne Green Gilbert and has attended adult dance intensives regularly as well to keep her own technique and teaching fresh and inspired. Liz presented at the SW Washington Early Childhood Education Tapestry Conference from 2008-2015 and choreographed and taught for Vancouver's Journey Theater Arts Group's summer and main stage musical theatre productions. Liz danced and taught at the 2011 Summer Intensive at The College of William & Mary. She has been a teaching artist and choreographer with the Vancouver, Camas, and Evergreen School Districts in SW Washington

from 2011-2022. Liz opened her own studio in 2015, and, in 2016, started the children's dance company, MOTUS (members of Dance and the Child International). She relocated to NE Tennessee in 2022 after passing on her studio to new leadership, and continues teaching in studio settings, church groups and for residents of addiction recovery programs.

Melissa Brading is a dancer, teacher and choreographer. She received her MFA in dance from the University of Michigan and her BFA from the University of Central Oklahoma. After dancing for Ad Deum Dance Company in Houston, TX, she spent 12 years in New York City as a freelance artist, where she worked with choreographers such as Hope Boykin, Nejla Yatkin, Sue Bernhard, Sarah Council and Kathryn Alter to name a few. She also choreographed for dance and theatre and participated in outreach through Avodah Dance. She taught Limón technique with the Limón Institute at Gibney and Peridance and served as an adjunct professor at the University of Michigan. Melissa is currently an Assistant Professor of Practice at Texas Tech University and is certified in Countertechnique and STOTT Pilates Reformer.

Edwin Brathwaite is a certified science and dance educator teaches at Meyer Levin Performing Arts School, IS 285, for the past 20 years. A native of Barbados, West Indies, He facilitates New York Citywide Dance professional development, Arts Monday and workshops for Dance Educational Laboratory (DEL). He is currently facilitating professional development for Connected Arts Network (CAN). Edwin has published several dance unit studies in the annual New York City Department of Education (DOE). He authored and presented a unit entitled Roots of Tap Dance: Soul Rhythms in The Dance Educational Laboratory (DEL) Tracing Footsteps: Honoring Diverse Voices Through Dance History in NYC, grades 6-8 Curriculum - Module 2, funded by The New York Community Trust and the New York City Department of Education. In January 2022, Edwin coauthored and presented Hip Hop: Cultivating Vision and Voice for the Tracing Footsteps Curriculum series two, Grades 6-8 curriculum - Module 2. He has been honored in his community with several awards. One of which is the Meyer Levin Intermediate School 285 Distinguished Educator Award, and a Citation from Senator Roxanne J. Persaud of the 19th Senate District, honoring and recognizing his exceptional contribution to the community he services. Edwin has performed with Passing Ancestral Knowledge Along Dance Company (PAKA), and in works choreographed by Elissaveta Isordanova, and continues to explore his own creativity within the community. Edwin uses formal assessment to support equity and assess to engage students in the art of dance through student voice and agency."

Garley 'GiGi Tonye' Briggs is a Nigerian-American renowned for her infectious energy and artistic innovations. A woman of faith, a mother, and advocate leader for movement arts, health, and wellness, GiGi's work has garnered attention, with features in Dance Magazine, CBS News, Fox 32 News and more! Since 2017, she established GiGi Tonye' Arts & Fitness, a revolutionary mobile dance and fitness™ studio and Chicago's first Dance and Wellness™Hub. With a Master's in Health Care Administration and over 15 years of experience in clinical patient care, GiGi is also a professional dancer, choreographer, fitness trainer and certified health and wellness coach. She serves as President of the Illinois Dance Education Organization and member of Global South Arts and Health Envoy. She is also very

involved with various health and arts organizations in the USA and globally.

Emily-Rose Brock is from Columbia, Maryland and a senior at Towson University. She is majoring in Dance Performance and Choreography with PK–12 Dance Education Certification and plans to graduate in December 2026. She is currently completing her student teaching internship at Perry Hall High School in Baltimore, Maryland.

Ana Carolina Brotons is a performer, choreographer, and dance educator born and raised in Miami, Florida. She holds a BFA in Modern Dance Performance from The University of the Arts and an MFA in Performance & Choreography from the University of Arizona. Ana spent over a decade performing, creating, and touring nationally and internationally with Diavolo | Architecture in Motion, where she also served as a rehearsal director and production manager. This experience deeply shaped her interest in physically rigorous movement practices, particularly the integration of contemporary floorwork, acrobatics, strength training, and anatomical awareness within dance performance and education. Ana is currently an Assistant Professor of Practice in the School of Theatre, Dance, and Film at Texas State University. Her teaching and research focus on injury prevention, sustainable training practices, and educating dancers to advocate for strength-based, anatomically informed approaches alongside technique. As an educator, she is equally committed to fostering artistry, curiosity, and embodied expression, encouraging dancers to develop both physical resilience and creative voice in support of long, healthy careers in dance.

Randa Broughton (M.A., Dance Education, Columbia University, Teachers College, B.S., Dance History & Criticism, Skidmore College), has been a New York based dance educator and performer for over 30 years. Presently she co-leads the dance program at Edward R. Murrow High School, in the Midwood section of Brooklyn. Since 2023 Murrow has been a Dance Education Lab School as well as a long time participant of the NYC Dance Commencement Exam. Randa has been a NYC facilitator of City-wide Professional Development and the Arts Achieve Initiative. She has studied extensively with multiple artists ranging from Alwin Nikolais, Frank Hatchett, to Zvi Gotheiner as well as performing and creating work for venues such as Dancespace at St. Mark's, 92nd Street Y, DIA, BAX, and Washington Square Church.

Ashley Brown is a dance educator, artistic director, and advocate for equity in the arts, committed to trauma-informed, community-centered movement education. She holds certifications in Adult and Youth Mental Health First Aid, Trauma-Informed Teaching Practices for Dance, and Social Emotional Learning (SEL), and grounds her pedagogy in body positivity, inclusive practice, and rigorous dance training for students of all pathways. Ashley has led transformative programs for youth and adults across educational, correctional, and artistic settings. Her work includes leading arts impact workshops in correctional facilities, culminating in her TEDxColumbiaUniversity performance, "BARS: You See Boundaries, I See Freedom." She previously directed the faith-based company BT Dance and has written on equity in the field, including "Decolonizing Dance Writing: Who Is Writing For?" She holds an MFA in Dance Performance and Choreography from Florida

State University and a BA in Child Development from Spelman College. Currently, Ashley serves as Director of the Martha Graham School and consults with The Juilliard School's K–12 Division, supporting schools in the U.S. and Vietnam. She also leads technology initiatives at the Martha Graham Center, advancing AI-powered archival systems and motion modeling research in collaboration with Cornell Tech and the Humanities and Artificial Intelligence Virtual Institute.

Kaysie S. Brown is an award-winning educator, choreographer, and dancer currently based in Austin, TX. She is a Professor of Dance and Head of Dance Teacher Certification in the School of Theatre, Dance, and Film at Texas State University (TXST) in San Marcos, TX. Her scholarly/ creative work at TXST involves the development of her arts integration outreach program Creation in Motion, a multi-faceted program that includes dance integration teacher training, residencies, and interactive performances by Creation in Motion Touring Ensemble for Young Audiences, or CIM TEYA (pronounced "SIM-TAY-YUH"). Brown has presented numerous workshops and papers on her work with Creation in Motion and CIM TEYA at conferences nationally and internationally. She is currently studying at Teachers College, Columbia University, with the intention of pursuing an interdisciplinary specialization in the Ed.D. Dance Education Program. Her research interests include dance teacher education and examining the utilization of dance education to develop and strengthen social & emotional learning.

Helen Buck-Pavlick is an education policy researcher and dance practitioner whose career bridges classrooms, state agencies, and academia to advance equitable and evidence-informed educational practices and policies. An active leader in dance education research and educational policy, Helen has over 20 years of experience in dance education teaching in K-12 dance, higher education, and the independent sector. She has served as the arts education consultant for the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (2022-2025) and the Arizona Department of Education (2021-2022), as well as on the NDEO Board of Directors (2022-2027), the National Coalition for Arts Standards Council (2024-present), and as Vice President of the State Education Agencies Directors of Arts Education (2023-2025). She has led state standards and model curriculum revisions and adoptions, created instructional resources and high-quality professional learning for all five artistic disciplines, and monitored and evaluated multi-million dollar federal programs. Helen is a PhD student in Educational Policy at The Ohio State University and a graduate associate in teacher preparation, where she designs and teaches seminars on critical education theory and mentors aspiring teachers. Her scholarship examines how education policy, governance, and curriculum intersect to expand access and opportunity, and promote democratic values, with a particular focus on dance and the arts. Helen holds an MFA in Dance (Arizona State University), MEd in Educational Foundations (Northern Arizona University), is a Registered Somatic Dance Educator (ISMET A), Registered Yoga Teacher (Yoga Alliance), and STEAM Certified Educator/Administrator (Innovative Collaborative). Helen's research and in-practice work have been published in Dance Education in Practice, Journal of Dance and Somatic Practices, Journal of Music and Dance, Journal of Dance Education, and Arts Education Policy Review. She has been selected to present at

conferences such as the National Dance Education Organization conference, the International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association conference, the University Council for Education Administration conference, the Midwest Political Science Association conference, the National Art Education Association Research Pre-Conference, and the Dance Science and Somatic Educators conference. She has also been a guest speaker on topics of federal arts education funding and state-level arts advocacy for the National Association for State Arts Agencies and the National Association for Music Education.

Daniel Burkholder choreographs, improvises, performs, teaches dance, and practices the Feldenkrais Method and mindfulness. His choreographic/improvisational work spans theatrical performances, site-specific events, immersive media, and screendance, and has been presented at numerous venues throughout North America and internationally. His current work includes: “On-Site”, a series of embodied screendance experiments; “Embodied Truth: finding ways to move together”, a collaboration with Kimani Fowlin examining race and gender through the lens of parenting; and, “act/re/act”, a podcast exploring improvisation through conversations with remarkable artists. Daniel is currently an Associate Professor of Dance at University of Wisconsin Milwaukee and the director of the MFA in Dance program.

Anne Burnidge (MFA, CLMA, RSME), Associate Professor of Dance and Director of Dance at University at Buffalo, is a dancer, dance-maker, educator and mind-body coach. Her choreography has been presented nationally and internationally from NYC and Chicago to Mexico and Taiwan. As a performer, she has danced in works by luminaries Bebe Miller, Meredith Monk, Jacques D’Amboise, Maguy Marin and many others. Her choreography often explores the intersections of dance and science, including her current project "(un)Settling Place," investigating the impacts of noise pollution on the oyster lifecycle. Burnidge’s research combines somatics and dance science with trauma informed pedagogies to develop healthy, holistic dance education and training methodologies. Her teaching focuses on educating the whole person, specializing in somatic-based contemporary dance and ballet technique, dance making, and Movement Analysis. She was the inaugural recipient of the NDEO Top Paper Citation for "Somatics in the Dance Studio: Embodying Feminist/Democratic Pedagogy.” She regularly presents her research at IADMS, DSSE, ISMETA, and NDEO, and is proud to be a member of the Dance Science and Somatics Educators (DSSE) organizing board.

Jackie Burns has been teaching for NDI New Mexico since 2000 and currently serves as Artistic Director of Outreach for the statewide organization. She leads the team of Outreach Program Directors based in Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and Residency (traveling to rural communities across New Mexico), developing curriculum and creating performances for children statewide. Jackie spearheads Teaching Artist training and enrichment while overseeing quality of class experiences and performances. She began her ballet training under Patricia Dickinson and Suzanne M. Johnston and her tap training under Bill Evans in Albuquerque. Jackie received her B.A. in Psychology from the University of New Mexico in 2005. She has served on faculty for the annual Bill Evans Rhythm Tap Dance Jams and Centrum's Bill Evans Dance Intensive in both New Mexico and

Port Townsend, WA. Jackie has performed and choreographed for New Mexico Ballet Company, where she also served as Assistant Artistic Director for two seasons, as well as Festival Ballet Albuquerque, Bill Evans Tap Ensemble, New Mexico Rhythm Tap Ensemble, Musical Theatre Southwest, and the University of New Mexico Dance Department.

C

Catherine Cabeen, MFA, RSMT/E, is a doctoral student in Developmental Psychology at The CUNY Graduate Center, where she is a Black Race and Ethnic Studies (BRES) Graduate Fellow. She is a former dancer with the Bill T Jones/Arnie Zane Company (BTJ/AZ), the Martha Graham Dance Company, and Richard Move's MoveOpolis!, among others. She directed Hyphen, an interdisciplinary performance company that toured internationally, from 2009-2019. Cabeen is a certified yoga instructor, a Registered Somatic Movement Therapist/Educator, and Mindfulness Meditation Teacher. She has been on the faculties of the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance, Cornish College, University of Washington, Middlebury College, University of Wyoming, Taiwan University of the Arts, Yale, Princeton, and Marymount Manhattan College where she had the pleasure of teaching at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility through MMC's prison education program. She currently teaches in both the Psychology and Education departments at Brooklyn College. catherinecabeen.com.

Alyssa Caliendo is a certified functional strength coach for dancers, aerialists, and movement artists! She began her professional dance training at Marymount Manhattan College where she gained her BA in dance, minor in Biology, and concentration in Body, Science/Motion. Since then, she has shifted into the strength world gaining numerous certifications including Anatomy Trains, Functional Strength, Barefoot Training Specialist, Trigger Point Therapy, and more. In addition to her professional work, she has also performed in dance, grand illusion magical arts, and aerial arts!Currently, she is an entrepreneur and creator of her signature virtual program called Get Strong Again, a course shifting the landscape of personal training through body awareness and fascial focused training for bodies of all kinds. She also teaches dance trapeze, silks, and Strong and Flexy, a strength class for aerialists. Alyssa is so excited to share her educational background with the dance teachers of NDEO!

Reign Capers is a Contemporary dance artist, educator, and researcher from Columbia, South Carolina. She is passionate about leadership, service, and education. Her research is at the intersection of existentialism, gender studies, queer theory, and dance studies. Reign looks forward to serving this community through continued education and engagement.

Nicole Carbone is from Linden, New Jersey and is a senior at Towson University. She is majoring in Dance Performance and Choreography with PK–12 Dance Education Certification and plans to graduate in December 2026. She is currently completing her student teaching internship at Middle River Middle School in Baltimore, Maryland.

Gerald Casel (he/they/siya) is artistic director of GERALDCASELDANCE. Their choreographic work complicates and provokes questions

surrounding colonialism, collective cultural amnesia, whiteness and privilege, and the tensions between the invisible/perceived/obvious structures of power. The company has been presented at Bates Dance Festival, La MaMa, New York Live Arts, Danspace Project at St. Mark's Church, CounterPulse, ODC Theater, Asia Pacific Dance Festival, and at festivals in South Korea, Taiwan, the U.K., and France. Casel is Professor in the Department of Dance at Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. A graduate of The Juilliard School, with an MFA from UW Milwaukee, they received a Bessie award for sustained achievement. Casel is the founder of Dancing Around Race, a community-engaged participatory process that interrogates racial inequities in dance. www.geraldcasel.com

Ryan Casey has over a decade of experience teaching dance at studios, universities, festivals, intensives, and arts programs across the country. With patience, humor, and an emphasis on rhythm, technique, and musicality, he has worked with dancers of all ages and all levels, specializing in classes for dancers ages 12 and older. In addition to choreographing for pre-professional and professional dancers – as well as his own company, Off Beat – he is a skilled soloist, ensemble performer, and improviser. Ryan often incorporates text and spoken word into his work, and he has been published in Dance Magazine, Dance Teacher, Dance Spirit, and the Journal of Dance Education. His dancing has been featured on So You Think You Can Dance, in an episode of the Audible podcast Authorized: Firsts, in a museum exhibit about shoes, in a music video for a Spanish pop star, and numerous other platforms. He is a proud alumnus of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, New York University, The School at Jacob's Pillow, and the National YoungArts Foundation. He is on faculty at The Dance Inn, where he trained under Thelma Goldberg, and Endicott College.

Anna Castillo is a National Board Certified, Elementary Dance Teacher with the Los Angeles Unified School District. She has been with LAUSD for 25 years as a classroom teacher and a dance teacher. Ms. Castillo is known as the dance teacher who works at 5 schools in diverse communities. She has taught students standards-based skills with guided practice, exploration, and inspires students to create and choreograph original work. She has successfully choreographed and helped lead the LAUSD ARTS FESTIVAL FAN FUSION FLASH DANCE with Kindergarten through 12th Grade students. Her philosophy is that every child should be exposed to the Arts to help develop the whole child. She is passionate about teaching creative dance to students from kindergarten to sixth grade in the community where she was born and raised, which gives her a sense of pride and hopes she makes a difference in their lives.

Ayaka Kamei Cento (she/her) is a New York–based dancer, educator, and producer, originally from Ehime, Japan. She has taught at 92NY, SUNY Purchase, Gibney Dance, Joffrey Ballet School, and more, bringing her passion for dance education to communities in both Japan and New York. A member of Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) since 2021, she has supported dance programs in public schools across New York.Ayaka has performed on Broadway in The Phantom of the Opera, at The Metropolitan Opera, and with Twyla Tharp Dance, MorDance, and New York Theatre Ballet. She is a graduate of Northern Ballet School and SUNY Purchase and has appeared in The

Audition (Nikon Commercial), The Show Must Go On (Apple TV+), and Étoile (Amazon Prime). She finds joy in connecting with others through the shared experience of art!

Bradford Chin (he/they), Graduate Student Representative, NDEO Advisory Council. San Francisco native Bradford Chin is a dance artist/methodologist, DEIJ/accessibility consultant, and audio describer for dance based in San Francisco, Chicago, and Los Angeles. Formerly a company member with AXIS Dance Company, his creative research interests are disability in dance, critically inclusive pedagogy, improvisation and/as composition, and creative process and aesthetics in Western concert dance culture. His work has been recognized and funded by over $35,000 in support from the California Arts Council, The Actors Fund, Arts Council for Long Beach, and the UCI Center for Medical Humanities, among others. He is currently on the Advisory Council for the National Dance Education Organization. Full bio and additional info available at https://sites.uci.edu/BradfordChin.

Adrienne Clancy, founded ClancyWorks Dance in 2001, and over the past two decades has taught and performed nationally in over 20 states and internationally in 9 countries on 6 continents. Dr. Clancy worked as a Company Member for: Bella Lewitzky, Liz Lerman, Nora Reynolds-Daniel, Bill Evans. Dr. Clancy, both an artist and a scholar, earned a PhD and MFA in Dance from Texas Woman's Univ., a MA in Dance History from Univ. of New Mexico. Awards for teaching include: NDEO's 2013 Outstanding Dance Educator of the Year, presenting at 2016 TEDx Midatlantic, honored on NBC News (Washington, DC), among others. In 2020 she founded Building Racial Equity in the Arts through Dance "B.R.E.A.D." and in 2007, the Dance Educators Training Institute, a professional development workshop for artists/educator

Karen Clemente is a full professor and the Director of the Dance Program at Ursinus College. She previously founded and then directed the Eastern University Dance Program for twenty-two years. Additionally, she is on the teaching staff at the Feet First Dance Center in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, where she was the co-director for over thirty years. Dr. Clemente has worked with the Pennsylvania State Department of Education, developing dance curriculum guidelines and academic standards for arts education. She currently serves as the Board Secretary of the Pennsylvania Dance Education Organization. Her research interests include: kinesthetic learning across the curriculum; dance improvisation and autobiography; authentic jazz dance; and dance and spirituality. Her most recent research includes 1920's–1940's era jazz and tap dance artists of the Paramount Theaters in Brooklyn and Manhattan, with particular focus on the life and career of Ralph Brown. She has a master's and a doctoral degree in Dance Education from Temple University. Over the span of her career, she has been the recipient of the Lindback Award for Excellence in Teaching (2001), the NDEO Outstanding Dance Educator for Higher Education (2009), and the Creative Hands and Voices Award by the Neighborhood Interfaith Movement in Philadelphia (2010).

Michelle Cole (she/her) is an educator, choreographer, dancer, scholar, and mother. She is a second-year PhD student in Critical Dance Studies at UC Riverside and a second-year Gluck Fellow. Michelle holds a Master's degree in Dance Education from New York University-Steinhardt and a Bachelor's degree in

Psychology from Florida International University's Honors College. She is the owner and managing director of Dance Culture LLC—a NY-based dance education and professional development company. From 2015 to 2024, Michelle served as adjunct faculty at NYU, where she taught Afro-Caribbean dance, Anthropology of Dance, and Hip-Hop Dance Culture. She also co-developed and co-advised NYU Steinhardt's Master's concentration in Teaching Dances of the African Diaspora. As a choreographer and performer, Michelle has presented and performed in New York, Chicago, Miami, Martha's Vineyard, Kampala (Uganda), and more. She was the Associate Choreographer of the 2023 Off-Broadway play (pray), which was chosen as a New York Times Critic's Pick and nominated for six Lucille Lortel Awards. She is interested in researching ways to decolonize the dance education space, revolutionize pedagogy, and both center and honor practices within dances of the African Diaspora.

Cameelah Pennington Cook is the Dance Director at Classen School of Advanced Studies at Northeast High School. She is a native of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. She earned her Bachelors in Fine Arts in Modern Dance Performance from the University of Oklahoma in 2011. Mrs. Pennington Cook is a graduate of Classen School of Advanced Studies, where she studied as a dance major. Throughout her life, Mrs. Pennington Cook has been a member of several professional dance companies such as Contemporary Dance Oklahoma, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, Hartel Dance Group, and R.A.C.E. Dance Company. She currently holds a certification in Acrobatic Arts. Her favorite styles of dance to teach include modern, jazz, and tap, and her favorite style to take is ballet. In her rare spare time, Mrs. Pennington Cook loves baking and crafting. She loves spending time adventuring with her husband and daughter. Most of all, Mrs. Pennington Cook loves sharing her love of dance with her students all over the city. She is really thankful to be serving in her career as the dance director at her Alma mater.

Julia Cooper is a teacher, artist, and choreographer. She began her career in Fort Collins, Colorado as a Canyon Concert Ballet Company member. She earned her BFA from The University of Wyoming and has studied with companies such as American Repertory Theatre, Trey McIntyre Project, Alonzo King Lines Ballet, Repertory Dance Theatre, Ririe Woodberry, and Complexions Contemporary Ballet. Julia spent two years dancing in New York City performing with Ballet Inc and Sheep Meadow Dance Theatre, which involved a variety of venues, including the Battery Dance Festival. Julia also had the opportunity to guest with several photographers, working both as a dancer and model. Julia completed her MFA in dance choreography from The University of Iowa. During her three years at Iowa she expanded her choreographic research with a focus on historical context, the use of narrative, and an emphasis on human connection. Her work aims to make ballet approachable in an effort to expand its influence beyond traditional boundaries and across generations. Julia is now on faculty and continuing her research at Colorado State University in the dance department.

Madia Cooper-Ashirifi is a Liberian dance educator, leader, and performer. She received an Ed.D from Vanderbilt University, a M.F.A. of dance performance and choreography from The College at Brockport and a B.F.A. Dance Education degree from Brenau University. She is

Chair and Associate Professor of Dance at Brenau. As a Liberian-American, Madia shares her culture and knowledge of West African and social dances with all ages. She is a performer of the Ghanaian dance company Mawre Dance and Drum, which travels throughout the Southeast performing at major venues and conducting residencies.

Derek Crescenti is a performing artist and educator whose work is shaped by his experiences dancing with the companies of Chase Brock, Donald Byrd, Daniel Gwirtzman, Larry Keigwin, Mark Morris, David Parker, and Megan Williams, among others. He is a rehearsal associate for Donald Byrd, assisting with commissions on the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, staging his work at Barnard College, DeSales University and Spectrum Dance Theater, and teaches Donald Byrd Contemporary Technique. Derek also works as a choreographic assistant to Larry Keigwin, most recently on new dances for the Paul Taylor Dance Company, Vail Dance Festival and has staged his work on Ormao Dance Company in Colorado Springs, CO. He has held faculty positions at DeSales University and the University of Washington and adjudicates for dance competitions and conventions nationwide through Impact Dance Adjudicators. Derek's choreography has been presented by Seattle International Dance Festival, Men in Dance, DeSales University, Ten Tiny Dances, UW Chamber Dance Company and with the Allentown Symphony Orchestra. His article Joining the Dance: Exploring Meaning-Making in Pedagogies of Restaging will soon appear in the Journal of Dance Education. Derek holds a BFA in Dance from the University of Michigan and an MFA in Dance from the University of Washington and is currently an Assistant Professor in the Dance Division at Montclair State University.

D

Yauri Dalencour, MFA, BFA, MA, Ph.D. (abd) is an interdisciplinary dance and visual artist, digital archivist, and entrepreneur. Her training includes Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre, Alonzo King Lines Ballet, her dance degree programs, and various NYC; San Francisco; Genoa, Italy, and Burgos, Spain dance studios during her time in those locations. Yauri is a classically trained anthropologist, was an archivist for Katherine Dunham and has a background in International Studies, African American and Ethnic Studies, Women Studies and technology. She has performed as a solo artist and with dance companies and musical theatre nationally and abroad. Concerned with intersections between art, culture, education, and technology, Yauri is a storyteller using dance, visual art, installation, and new media to create multi-sensory performance works, engendering empathy and engaging critical consciousness. She is the Founder/Artistic Director of Yauri Dalencour Dance that has several initiatives and coined the term ethnodanceology, naming one of her community based education outreach initiatives after it, EthnodanceologyCreative. She is CEO/Owner of Dancetime Publications, Co-founder of the Brelii, Editorial Board Member of the publication, Dance Education in Practice. Advisory Board of Directors, Director of Awards for the National Dance Education Organization and Layout Editor/Designer for Jack and Jill of America, Inc covering several regional publications. Yauri is also a full-spectrum doula and home birther of her

children. Her work explores visual culture and representations of the Black experience, particularly the family and Black motherhood.

Deborah Damast is Associate Professor and Director of Dance Education at NYU Steinhardt, where she leads Kaleidoscope, concerts, and Uganda study abroad. She was selected for the inaugural Steinhardt Mid-Career Leadership initiative and received grants that included Caring Culture, Innovation and Diversity, Faculty Challenge, and Internationalizing the Curriculum. She has served on NYSDEA (Past President) and NDEO and is currently on Dance Teacher, DEiP, Peridance, and Misty Copeland's BE BOLD boards. She has presented at numerous conferences and festivals in the U.S. including Dance Teacher, NDEO, CUNY, NYSDEA, UDEO, and internationally in Japan, China, Korea, and Uganda. Her choreography has been shown at over 40 venues in NYC, including Alvin Ailey and Radio City Music Hall. Deborah has taught for LREI, 92Y/DEL, Peridance, OBT, The Yard, NYCB, and has written curricula for Paul Taylor, Carnegie Hall, DEL, NYCB, Ailey, and NYC DOE. Deborah is a recipient of the NYU Star Faculty, NDEO Outstanding Dance Educator, Steinhardt Teaching Excellence, Dance Teacher Magazine, NYSDEA Outstanding Leaderships, and the Martha Hill Mid-Career Award. She was a 2024-2025 Fellow at the Center for Ballet and the Arts with a focus on leadership, and is a founding member of World Dance Education Alliance in Bejing.

Maria Daniel is a National Dance Foundation Partner and creator of the copyrighted Hip Hop Experience Dance Class (and Curriculum) which has been featured on CBS, NBC and in various publications. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of iDance Ministry (dba iDance Experience) which serves culturally and economically diverse dancers who seek meaningful experiences in dance and mentoring. Maria Daniel advances dance education in public schools in New Jersey and in New York. Maria received 5 mayoral proclamations for her work through iDance and a 2023 Joint Resolution by the NJ Senate and Assembly (for her meritorious record of service, leadership, and commitment as a dance educator who "leverages the creative arts to benefit those impacted by mental health issues, addiction, and disabilities." Two notable programs that have a local, state and international impact are the Hip Hop Experience Dance Curriculum (HHE) and Project BrOKen. HHE is a copyrighted curriculum that is implemented with an SEL (social emotional learning) lens and DEIA+ focus. HHE teaches intergenerational Hip Hop authentically, contextually, and experientially. Our program promotes equitable access to dance experiences marginalized and diverse populations. Our HHE programs have transformed communities using culture, community-wide collaborations and connections that promote unity within the community. Project BrOKen is a climactic, transformative and evocative curation of workshops, dance performances and expressive dance art that explore mental health, addiction and neurodivergence while also depicting hope, healing and recovery. In addition to hosting Project BrOKen workshops at schools and colleges in NJ and NY, the World Congress of Dance hosted iDance and Project BrOKen in Nassau, Bahamas to work with their urban youth and young boys housed in a detention center. iDance transforms youth through our customized workshops and performances. CBS New York Anchor Cindy Hsu, featured iDance and Project BrOKen live on her "Breaking the Stigma" series. Project BrOKen was also featured on Eyewitness News in Nassau,

Bahamas. In addition to teaching dance and providing choreography, Maria coordinates National Dance Week programs, hosts dance workshops, coordinates dancer retreats and hosts teacher webinars. Maria has received a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Volunteer Service Award, a Professional Business Woman of the Year Award (NANBPWC), a Director's Award (from Dance the World Disney) and an Outstanding Director Award (from Dance Ministry Magazine). Maria Daniel has transformed communities using dance and creative arts. Notable choreography credits: Disney World, a Hip Hop Opera, the McDonald's Gospelfest, the Wawa Welcome America Festival, Project BrOKen, an event for New York Fashion Week, a tribute to Mahalia Jackson in Philadelphia, Hershey Park performances, live performances for the Circle of Sisters NY Gospel Showcase, National Dance Week events, Philadelphia Christian Fashion Week and an event at the National Mall in Washington, D.C.
Publications:
1. The Hip Hop Experience Dance Curriculum 2015-2024 *provided to certified teachers in the HHE curriculum
2. The Miseducation of Hip Hop Dance (National Dance Education Organization)
3. When Dance became my Medicine (National Dance Education Organization)
Panels/Features:
NOTE: Will be hosting a workshop for the 2024 NDEO Conference titled: Hip Hop Experience: A Masterclass.
1. 2023 NDEO National Conference: Hip Hop Dance: A Therapy Session Workshop
2. NDEO National Conference: Hip Hop Dance Educator Panelist (PreK to 12th grade)
3. Dance NJ Workshop: Culture, Community and Connections through Hip Hop Dance
4. National Dance Foundation Feature: Interview on National Dance Week events
5. Dance New Jersey Webinar: Miseducation of Hip Hop Dance

Careitha Davis, a Brooklyn native with roots in Trinidad and Tobago, is a professional dancer, choreographer and educator. From an early age Careitha started training as a dancer in Modern, Jazz, Ballet and African while traveling as a young performer. Careitha attended SUNY Purchase College receiving a BA in Media, Society & the Arts and earned an MA in Dance Education K-12 Track from New York University. She has performed the works of George Faison, Dianne McIntyre, Ronald K. Brown, Mouminatou Camara, Joya Powell/Movement of the People, Jemal Gaines, Michael Manswell and Pearl Primus. Careitha began teaching Soca at Cumbe: Center for African and Diaspora Dance in 2018 and established BodyRa Movement in 2020.Performing for soca artists: Machel Montano, Olatunji and Destra Garcia. Careitha has taught workshops in Basel, Uganda, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Martin and the United States. Her works have been performed at Spoke The Hub, PBS-Travel BareFeet, Alvin Ailey Citigroup and the Apollo Theatre. Careitha is awarded a Jacob’s Pillow College Partnership Program Faculty Research Fellowship, currently an adjunct at New York University- School of Steinhardt teaching Afro-Caribbean, serving as a DOE Dance Educator and a Teacher’s College, Columbia EdD student.

Paris Davison - Creative Netwerk (CN) inspires, educates, and builds community through dance culture. Through curriculum-based Hip Hop, Street Dance, and DJ programming, CN develops the next generation of leaders, strengthens a national network of street dance artists, and expands access to cultural education rooted in African American and Latinx traditions. CN is dedicated to the performance and preservation

of American art forms created by historically marginalized communities and promotes equity, empowerment, and healing through arts education for all ages. By addressing risks faced by under-resourced youth, supporting creative professionals, and increasing school engagement and career pathways, CN strengthens individual outcomes and community well-being.

Julia deLeon is a Dallas-based artist and educator whose work explores themes of identity, expression, and representation. Her vibrant and layered artworks, often created by painting figurative forms over found photographs, playfully challenge societal norms. Inviting viewers to engage in open-ended dialogue around identity. With over a decade of experience in arts education, Julia has taught in both classroom and community settings, including several years as a secondary visual arts educator. She currently serves as the Professional Learning Manager at Big Thought, where she designs and facilitates professional development in arts integration, social emotional learning, and culturally responsive teaching. In addition to training, she coaches and mentors educators, helping them grow in their teaching practice and deepen their impact in the classroom. Julia believes that the arts should be inclusive and accessible to all. She is committed to creating spaces, both in classrooms and communities, where creativity is a right, not a privilege. Through her work, she continually seeks to break down barriers to participation and ensure the arts serve as a vehicle for connection, empowerment, and equity. She holds a BFA in Studio Art from the University of North Texas and an MA in Art Education from Texas Tech University. Through both her artistic and educational practice, Julia advocates the power of the arts to foster identity, dialogue, and meaningful social change.

Margaret "Daisy" DeLucia is a dance educator of five years and a current MFA in Dance student at Temple University. After graduating from Muhlenberg College in 2020 with a BA in Theatre and a double minor in Dance and Creative Writing, she unexpectedly fell into the world of dance pedagogy and chose to continue her education in the field. Daisy's research interests include supporting neurodivergent needs in dance spaces, building and negotiating fair and sustainable workplace conditions for dance educators, and exploring queer representation within the traditionally heteronormative structures of the dance world. Her choreographic interests are rooted in process-based work, somatic inquiry, and task-driven improvisation, often examining themes of power, agency, labor, and embodiment. Through both teaching and choreography, Daisy prioritizes accessibility, consent-based practices, and critical reflection, aiming to create dance spaces that are both affirming and responsive to the lived experiences of dancers and educators alike.

Ms. **Kathleen Dominiak Treasure** has earned a B.A. in Dance from Hope College and an M.F.A in Performance/Choreography from Texas Woman's University. She served as an Adjunct Professor of Dance for Valparaiso University's Department of Theater for 12 years in addition to being co-director of the VU Dance Ensemble. She is currently the Dance Director for the Hammond Arts and Performance Academy in Hammond, Indiana. She helped revise the Indiana Department of Education's Dance Standards for 2017 and 2023 and is currently a member of NDEO Mentorship K-12 Committee. In 2016, she won the Teacher of the Year

Awards for the Hammond Education Foundation and Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce in addition to choreography/acting awards from the Northwest Indiana Theater Foundation. She is currently a Pilates Instructor for Fitness Pointe located at Community Hospital in Northwest Indiana and began their Pilates Pointe Studio which includes group and individual training program on the mat and Pilates Apparatus.

Gina D'Antonio-Spears has been teaching dance in Chicago Public Schools since 1998. During her career, she has taught all grade levels of dance, PreK through 12th grade, teaching elementary school dance for the majority of her career. Her specialties include unit and lesson planning, assessment, arts integration, differentiation, and questioning and discussion techniques. She especially enjoys integrating dance history into her lessons at every grade level. Ms. Spears provides her students with a rich dance curriculum that is standards-based and well-rounded. Ms. Spears believes that all students can dance and should be provided with a dance education. Her mission is to expose students to the joy of movement, helping her students become creative thinkers, problem solvers, and the future audiences for dance. She hopes that one day all Chicago Public Schools will have a certified dance teacher and program. Ms. Spears is a teacher leader in a variety of capacities. She has been a Framework Specialist, developing resources and leading professional development connected to the Danielson Framework for Teaching. She was an Arts Instruction Specialist, leading dance professional development and co-facilitating the dance Community of Practice group. She mentored two dance resident teachers in the first Dance Teacher Residency program. She mentors first-year arts teachers in the New Teacher Cohort and has been a mentor for the National Dance Education Organization for all nine cohorts. Ms. Spears has a vision that through leading dance educators, she can help make the current dance programs in CPS stronger and help the district to invest in more programs throughout the district. When not teaching, leading professional development, or mentoring, Ms. Spears enjoys exploring Chicago with her children, attending live performances, and taking long walks through Portage Park, the neighborhood where she works and lives.

Annie D'Orazio, Ph.D., serves as Deputy Executive Director of the National Institute of Flamenco. A long-time student of and advocate for flamenco, she brings a humanities-based research background to arts administration, strategic planning, and organizational development. D'Orazio earned a doctorate in English Literature from the University of New Mexico (2017) and participated as a researcher in BRiC (Banff Research in Culture), "Demos: Life in Common." At NIF, she applies analytical and writing expertise to grant writing, legislative advocacy, and strategic planning, supporting organizational infrastructure that advances access and long-term sustainability. In addition to her work at the Institute, she mentors and coaches researchers and writers, supporting creative and scholarly projects through research, writing, and project management.

Heather Dougherty is a dance artist and educator hailing from Pennsylvania. Dougherty has mentored a broad range of dance students at independent dance studios and in college and university dance programs. She has also been a practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method of Somatic Education since 2013. Dougherty earned a BS in Dance and Dance Education from NYU and an MFA in Theatre Arts and Dance Choreography from The University of Arizona.

Dougherty is currently a doctoral student in the Ed.D. Dance Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her scholarly interests include dance education in the context of adult learning and the intersection of human development and embodied cognition. Her current research investigates the role of dance education within community colleges.

Dr. Donna Dragon specializes in developing pedagogy, curriculum, courses, and workshops that use movement and the body to build deeper self-awareness, communication, and learning. Her methods help both individuals and groups reflect on their habits and motivations; question their ways of working; and make positive changes to their core values and daily practices. Her teaching draws from a synergy of science, education, embodiment, and art. She incorporates research from neurocognitive brain science, psychology, education, and human movement studies such as somatics and dance. This research foundation is backed by her certified expertise as a Somatic Movement Therapist and Laban Movement Analyst. She also brings decades of creative experience to her work as a professional performer and choreographer in multiple dance styles, including ballet, jazz, musical theater, and improvisation. Dr. Dragon is also an experienced leader and business owner. She has created and managed private dance schools in Massachusetts; developed and led community arts programs; worked as a creative entrepreneur; and taught as a K12 teacher and university professor. She is a recent Chairperson of the Bridgewater State University Department of Dance where she prepared future dance educators for K-12 MA Certification in Dance and private sector entrepreneurship. She serves the state of Massachusetts as the President of the Massachusetts Dance Education Organization (MADEO). She was the writer for the first MA Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) Arts Model Curriculum unit in Dance (2015). She is the co-writer for the DESE and MA Art/Learning collaboration for developing Foundational Skills Progressions for Pre k-12 skill development (2024); and is currently an invited member of the Test Development Conference Dance Content Advisory Committee for Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). Dr. Dragon was bestowed the Outstanding Dance Educator of the Year Award (post-secondary) by NDEO (2014) and the Bridgewater State University Presidential Award for Distinguished Teaching (2018). By combining leadership experience with her artistic background, she builds welcoming, high-energy learning environments. In every class, she focuses on creating rewarding, hands-on experiences that spark curiosity, boost teamwork, and inspires fresh thinking.

Elise Drew León, SHRM-SCP is the Director of People and Culture at the School of American Ballet (SAB), where she has led transformative initiatives in diversity, equity, and inclusion for nearly a decade. A former professional dancer with the Limón Dance Company, Elise toured as a U.S. State Department cultural ambassador and was honored with the 2014 Princess Grace Honoraria for Dance. Acclaimed by The New York Times for the “joyousness of her dancing,” Elise has reshaped the field by building programs that expand access, representation, and belonging in ballet and beyond. At SAB, Elise enhanced national teacher training initiatives, spearheaded cross-departmental transformation efforts, and fostered a culture of inclusion and belonging. She has presented at the International Association of Blacks in Dance Conference and Lincoln Center’s inaugural

Curriculum for Change, while mentoring the next generation of arts administrators through national internships and fellowship programs. Her career embodies a rare blend of artistic excellence, organizational leadership, and a profound belief in the transformative power of dance. A graduate of the Ailey/Fordham BFA Program in Dance, she is a 2020 CUP Fellow through the Council of Urban Professionals. Elise resides in New Jersey with her husband and two young children.

Maggi Dueker is an Assistant Professor and the Chair of the Department of Dance at Webster University. She founded and is the Director of Webster's Summer Dance Intensives. Her choreography has been performed by the Webster University Dance Ensemble, Convergence, and at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, American College Dance Festival, Dancing in the Streets, and National Dance Day. Dueker has an MFA in Dance from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and received her BFA in Dance and BA in History from Webster (Summa cum laude). She performed professionally with Kaley Pruitt Dance, Giordano Dance Chicago II, Royal Caribbean International, the MUNY, and as a freelance performer with Melissa Thodos and Dancers and the Chicago Arts Project under the direction of Jay Franke. She has previously taught at Northwestern University, the Giordano Dance Center, and currently teaches for St. Louis Dance Theatre and RESILIENCE Dance Company. For her work at Webster, Dueker has been nominated for the Excellence in Teaching and Advising Excellence awards.

Ali Duffy (PhD, MFA) is Professor, Graduate Director, and Associate Head of Dance at Texas Tech University; the Artistic Director of Flatlands Dance Theatre; and co-founder of the International Parenting and Dance Network. Her book, Dancing Motherhood, was published in 2023 (Routledge) and Careers in Dance was published in 2021 (Human Kinetics). She recently co-edited the special issue of Research in Dance Education, "Dancing, Parenting, and Professional Challenges". Her research is supported by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, and Texas Commission on the Arts. She also teaches courses about arts advocacy and community building through dance in NDEO's Online Professional Development Institute.

Diane Duggan, PhD, BC-DMT is a dance educator, board certified dance/movement therapist and licensed psychologist. She created and taught dance programs for students with disabilities from 1973 to 2013. Her work is based in choreography, and her students performed at Lincoln Center, Central Park, South Street Seaport, St. Mark's Church, NYU's Frederick Lowe Theater, and the Apollo Theater. While continuing teaching students, she served on the NYC Department of Education D75 Positive Behavior Support Team, creating and teaching professional development and consulting with schools on PBS, crisis intervention and behavior intervention plans. Dr. Duggan has taught in the Dance Education MA program at New York University since 1994 and in the 92NY Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) since 2006. She is co-author of Dance Education for Diverse Learners. She served on the Board of Directors of the American Dance Therapy Association and was co-executive producer of the film Dance Therapy: The Power of Movement. She is on the editorial board of Dance Education in Practice and was a member of the Dance/NYC Task Force on Dance and Disability. She mentors dance educators in the Arnhold Dance Teacher Support Program. Dr.

Duggan received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York State Dance Education Association in 2016 and a Dance Teacher Magazine award in 2024.

Toni Duncan has a BA in Dance and a BS in Marketing from DeSales University and a MA in Dance Education from the University of Northern Colorado. She has been a full time dance faculty member at the Pennsylvania Leadership Charter School's Center for Performing and Fine Arts in West Chester since 2011. She has been thesis editor for the University of Northern Colorado's MA in Dance Education program since 2017. Toni is an active member of the National Dance Education Organization, participating as a mentor in their teacher mentorship program, serving on several award selection committees, and has presented at the National Conference several times starting in 2017. She has presented original modern dance works at the 2013 and 2015 PA State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, Eastern District Conference. She presented her integrated arts lesson plan What's Your Angle? Lessons Learned from Mixing Geometry and Dance at the Philadelphia Dance Project's Dance TAG workshop series in March 2020. Toni is an active member of the PA Chapter of NDEO, (PADEO) She is the PADEO's National Honor Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA) liaison and serves on the social justice committee.

Dr. Anna Dunn, RAD RT, has worked as the DSA Ballet Mistress since 2006. She also serves the school as the Community Arts Liaison connecting DSA with opportunities in the broader community and working with students and staff to advocate for the arts. Dunn received her Master's in Arts Administration in 2014 from Goucher College and her Bachelor's in Dance Education in 2005 from Winthrop University. She received her Ed.D. in Teacher Leadership at KSU in 2024 with a research focus on The Value of Mentorship for Black Ballerinas. In addition to teaching at DSA, she is the Education and Outreach Coordinator for Dance Canvas, connecting the public and private schools in Metro Atlanta with dance curriculum to resources in the community. Dunn was the founding president of the Dance Educators of GA Society, Inc.

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Martha Eddy, CMA, EdD has been awarded NDEO Outstanding Educator, is a renowned author, somatic movement researcher, and social entrepreneur. She has created four training programs: Active Embodiment for Facilitators, Moving For Life Certified Instructor training, BoMiDa somatic dance certification, which prepare you for her Dynamic Embodiment Somatic Movement Therapy Training. She enjoys creating trauma-informed programming for the general public, teachers, and diverse professionals. Most recently she created a healthy back prevention and rehab program for the surgeons and interventionists in the Yale School of Medicine. She supports people throughout their lifespan to understand the role of our bodies and movement in behavior, holding stress, releasing trauma, and finding purpose and joy. She lectures worldwide on the Continuum of Stress to Trauma and how to set up healing environments. As an educational mentor, she can support you, your students or your school administrators to facilitate trauma-informed pedagogy, workshops or curricula. She loves a challenge and has worked with arts integration, dance

science, embodied conflict resolution, perceiving warning signs of psychophysical problems, and recognizing and shifting ineffectual communication. As a master Laban Movement Analyst and Body-Mind Centering faculty member Martha guides creative inquiry and critical thinking for self-care and compassionate relating.

Dr. Scott N. Edgar (he/him) has dedicated his career to highlighting the potential music education and educators have to build life skills students will utilize long after they leave the classroom. As a notable authority on music education and Social Emotional Learning, Dr. Edgar has emerged as the leading researcher, best-selling author, and internationally sought-after clinician on the subject. He is the author of Music Education and Social Emotional Learning: The Heart of Teaching Music, The ABCs of My Feelings and Music (co-authored with his wife Stephanie), and editor of Portraits of Music Education and Social Emotional Learning.

Emily Duggins Ehling (she/her) is the Assistant Teaching Professor of Stage Movement and Dance at the University of Missouri. As a dance teacher and choreographer, Emily primarily draws from Horton Technique, Release Technique, somatic practices, and improvisation to encourage grounded, expansive, curious dancing. She researches the intersection of dance processes and theatre processes, with a focus on creating and maintaining ethical, care-based rehearsal spaces. Her choreographic processes strive to prioritize the humans involved, seeking to build genuine care and empathy among the collaborators that might be felt by the audience. Emily has independently produced five full-length contemporary dance premieres since 2019, most recently …and everything stays the same… She has choreographed original works for RESILIENCE Dance Company, the Saint Louis Dance Theatre trainees, Modern American Dance Company 2, Consuming Kinetics Dance Company, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and Washington University Dance Collective. Her choreography has been shown broadly at festivals across the country. After dancing with Modern American Dance Company 2, The Slaughter Project, and Black Irish Contemporary Hip Hop Company, Emily was a founding company member with RESILIENCE Dance Company. She has served as the dramaturg for multiple new works by Emily Haussler.

Rosie Elliott (they/she) is a New York–based dance educator, choreographer, researcher, and teaching artist. Rosie holds a B.A. in Dance and Gender Studies from Barnard College of Columbia University and is currently pursuing an M.A. in Dance Education at Hunter College (CUNY). They previously served as an AmeriCorps ArtistYear Resident Teaching Artist, teaching K–5 dance in New York City public schools, where they designed inclusive, standards-aligned curricula integrating social-emotional learning, creative process, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Rosie's scholarly work centers on trauma-informed ballet pedagogy and adult learning. Their article, "Facilitating 'Corrective Experiences' with Ballet: The Site of Trauma as the Site of Healing," was published in the Journal of Dance Education. In addition to their academic work, Rosie serves as Director of Education at Queer the Ballet, where they consult on curriculum development and pedagogical programming that advances LGBTQ+ visibility and equity in ballet spaces. They also serve as Associate Director of Renversons Dance, a contemporary ballet company based in New York City. As a

choreographer, Rosie has received commissions from organizations including the Knight Foundation and Queer the Ballet, with work presented at venues such as Baruch Performing Arts Center and Green Space. Across research, teaching, and creative practice, Rosie is committed to building dance spaces rooted in rigor, care, collaboration, and access.

Amal Elwardi - Born in Casablanca, Morocco, Amal Elwardi received her BFA at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor before furthering her professional career as an Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater Fellow in New York City. She was trained and performed dance works by Alvin Ailey, Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, José Limón, David Parsons, Bill De Young, Jean Issacs, Terry Wilson, and Marcos Duran, amongst others. Amal received her MFA, Creative Practice in Dance, from Saint Mary's College of California. Currently, she is finalizing certification as Registered Somatic Movement Educator in Dr. Martha Eddy's Dynamic Embodiment program. While developing grants for the Moving On Center School for Participatory Arts and Somatic Research in Berkeley, CA, Amal facilitates movement and writing courses at College of Alameda and Saint Mary's College of California, and she serves students with disabilities through the San Francisco Department of Rehabilitation. She presents at conferences worldwide including AAUW, BMCA, CDEA, Eastwest Somatics, ISMETA, and NDEO. Amal has been a board member of the Body-Mind Centering® Association since 2023.

Deanna Encinias is a lifelong dancer and educator with extensive training in ballet and Spanish Classical forms. Her teachers include Lynn Crawford (Atlanta Ballet), Mel Tomlinson and Melissa Hayden (New York City Ballet), Luis Fuente (Joffrey Chicago), and Pedro Azorín, Joaquín Villa, and Pacita Tomas (Madrid). As a performer, she danced as a soloist in Anthony Tudor's Dark Elegies and with the New Mexico Ballet Company and Ballet Repertory Theatre in principal and featured roles. Encinias is an experienced teacher and holds professional certifications in physical training for adults and youth. She has taught ballet and Spanish dance in multiple settings, including the University of New Mexico, the Walnut Hill School for the Arts, Tierra Adentro of New Mexico, and the National Institute of Flamenco's Conservatory of Flamenco Arts. At NIF, her work centers on education programming and long-term training pathways, including instruction in Jota, Escuela Bolera, and ballet.

Eva Encinias is Professor Emeritus of Dance at the University of New Mexico and Founding Director of the National Institute of Flamenco. She began teaching flamenco at UNM in 1976 and went on to develop the Flamenco Concentration within the Department of Theatre and Dance, establishing flamenco as a sustained area of academic study within a public research university. Her work was instrumental in creating curricular structures that positioned flamenco alongside other degree pathways and supported its long-term viability. Raised in one of the few flamenco families in the United States, Encinias learned the form through generational transmission, including study with her mother, Clarita Garcia de Aranda. She founded the dance company Ritmo Flamenco in 1973 and toured nationally for fifteen years. Beyond the university, Encinias has played a central role in developing flamenco in New Mexico through performance, education, and community advocacy, with a longstanding commitment to access through scholarships and youth programs.

Encinias retired from UNM in 2020 after 43 years of teaching and service and continues to provide leadership as Founding Director of the National Institute of Flamenco.

Joaquín Encinias is Artistic Director of Yjastros: The American Flamenco Repertory Company. Raised in a flamenco family in the United States, he began studying flamenco and other dance forms as a child with his grandmother, Clarita, and performed from an early age, later becoming a soloist in his mother's company, Ritmo Flamenco. He has worked with leading flamenco artists including Antonio Canales, Eva La Yerbabuena, Los Farrucos, Manolete, Carmen La Talegona, and Mercedes Amaya.
As Artistic Director, Encinias has choreographed and collaborated with a wide range of flamenco and Spanish dance artists, contributing to the development of a repertory archive sustained through ongoing performance and training. His work emphasizes flamenco as a contemporary practice while maintaining deep engagement with its forms and lineages.

Marisol Encinias is Associate Professor of Dance and Head of Dance in the Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of New Mexico. In this role, she oversees the BA in Dance with parallel concentrations in Flamenco and Contemporary Dance and works closely with faculty and administration on curriculum design, assessment, and long-term program development across undergraduate and graduate levels. Her work focuses on building sustainable academic pathways for non-dominant dance forms within public higher education, with particular attention to equity, access, and institutional structure.
Encinias is a dancer, choreographer, and educator whose professional practice spans performance, pedagogy, and arts leadership. In addition to her academic role, she is Executive Director of the National Institute of Flamenco, where she leads educational, community-based, and professional initiatives that connect university training with broader cultural ecosystems. Her scholarship and creative work examine flamenco as a contemporary form and consider how institutional frameworks shape artistic legitimacy and access.

Dr. Emily Enloe graduated from USC-Columbia with her BA in Dance Education in May 2010. She has taught middle and high school dance in South Carolina since graduating in 2010. Additionally, Enloe's work as the graduate mentor for the Dancers Connect program at USC-Columbia earned her the 2012 NDEO Elsa Posey Graduate Student Scholarship. She is also the Past President for both SCAHPERD and SCDA and has taught in the master's program for dance education at UNCG. Enloe earned her MEd in 2013 from USC-Columbia in Early Childhood Education and graduated with her EdD in Leadership from Charleston Southern University in 2022. Her research interests include whole child development particularly of adolescents, pedagogy and curriculum, somatics-based dance approaches, and culturally responsive pedagogy.

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Dr. Rima Faber, PhD, MA, BA - Rima returned to academia after a full career as performer, choreographer, director of several performing companies, and founder and director of the Primary Movers Dance School and Company (1979-2000). Her thesis focused on kinesthetic learning for primary school age children and centered on cutting edge research in cognitive

and brain development. Her dissertation researched the philosophic and pedagogical principles of the National Standards for Dance Education. She taught in DC Public Schools from 1980-1997. In the mid- and late 1990s, Rima worked with National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) on developing, facilitating, and implementing the national assessments in arts education. Rima is the founding President and Interim-Executive Director of the National Dance Education Organization, where she served as Program Director for 12 years. At NDEO, she led the development of Standards for Dance in Early Childhood, the NDEO 2005 Standards for Dance Education in the Arts, and chairs the Dance Task Force for Dance for the National Core Arts Standards in Dance. She served as Research Director in NDEO's research initiative Research in Dance Education and was co-editor for Priorities for Research in Dance Education: A Report to the Nation. She has presented her research regularly at conferences since 1996. She founded and was President of Capital Region Educators of Dance Organization (CREDO) before it morphed into the Maryland Dance Education Association (MDEA), served on the Advisory Boards of a number of prominent local and national dance organizations, and is actively on the Advisory Board of Dance Teacher+ magazine. Her teaching in higher education includes Montgomery Community College, American University, New York University, and is entering her seventh year in a summer residency at the University of Northern Colorado. In 2002, she received the NDEO Visionary Award, in 2004, was admitted into the American University Performing Arts Hall of Fame, presented the DanceMetro DC Dance Educator Award in 2006, and honored by a Lifetime Achievement Award from NDEO in 2014. Faber developed her first online distance learning course in 2010 and has taught for Rutgers University, George Washington University, and consistently in OPDI. Faber continues to create numerous innovative curricula and professional development programs that can inspire and promote the full depth, scope, and joy of dance!

SK Fetter is a Doctor of Occupational Therapy and Program Coordinator for Belong Disability Ministry. She earned her bachelor's degree in Physiology from Southern Methodist University and began her career in research, publishing work on gait mechanics, limb length discrepancies, and lower extremity prosthetics. SK received her doctorate from Texas Woman's University, where she specialized in Intellectual Disability and Autism. Her doctoral capstone centered on developing a skills-based independent living program at Belong. The program was so well received that it became a lasting part of Belong's adult services, and SK was hired to continue growing and coordinating programming for the adult community. In addition to her role at Belong, SK owns a small home health occupational therapy practice, Empower OT, where she works with individuals across the lifespan and with a wide range of abilities and diagnoses. One of the most meaningful aspects of her work is teaching and mentoring future occupational therapists. Through Belong, she serves as a clinical instructor for fieldwork students, a doctoral capstone supervisor, and a guest lecturer for first-year OT students. SK is passionate about helping emerging practitioners see the value of specializing in IDD and Autism, and about sharing the creativity, flexibility, and joy of community-based and nonprofit practice areas.

Mary Fitzgerald is a dance artist whose work includes contemporary modern dance choreography, dance filmmaking, and socially

engaged arts. She was a member of Kei Takei's Moving Earth for nearly ten years, performing and teaching internationally. She also has danced with A Ludwig Dance Theatre, Fred Darsow Dance, and several independent choreographers in the United States. Mary's creative work has been presented throughout the U.S. and abroad and has received funding from such organizations as the Japan Foundation, Ministry of Culture in Mexico, National Endowment of the Arts, Arizona Commission on the Arts, and ASU's Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts and Institute for Humanities Research. Mary's publications about socially engaged arts and dance, women and aging have been featured in several books and journals. She is a professor at Arizona State University.

Terri Filips Vaughan, M.F.A. is Associate Professor of Theatre and Fine Arts, Dance Director and Resident Choreographer for Niagara University, where she has choreographed over 30 musicals and 19 concert works. During this time she had the privilege of working along side the great musical team of John Kander and the late Fred Ebb. Terri has worked as a freelance teacher, choreographer and theatre director for numerous schools, community groups, studios and professional companies. She co-founded InSync Dance Theatre, and has choreographed professionally, working at ArtPark, Shakespeare in Delaware Park, Hope Summer Repertory Theatre, Zodiaque, SUNY Buffalo SUNY Fredonia and Hope College.

Nicole Flinn, M.A. is an Associate Professor of Dance at Hope College. She specializes in dance pedagogy, curriculum development, arts integration, assessment, and advocacy. She developed a K-12 dance program and worked as a public-school teacher for 15 years. Nicole is the director of StrikeTime Dance Theatre, a pre-professional student company that promotes dance outreach for children, engaging over 10,000 youth each year. She serves on the NDEO Membership Engagement Advisory Committee and is a member of the board for several organizations including Dance for the International Child (DaCi) USA, SHAPE Michigan, and Michigan Dance Council. Nicole was a leading member in the dance portion of Michigan's Arts Education Instruction and Assessment Project.

Megan Flynn is a choreographer, dancer, educator, and embodied scholar. She is the founding artistic director of the Philadelphia-based Megan Flynn Dance Company. Her choreography has been presented in festivals and showcases across the US as well as abroad: ATLAS/ ImPulsTanz: Vienna International Dance Festival (Austria); Edinburgh Fringe (Scotland); and site-specific locations in southern Spain. She earned her MFA in Dance from the University of California-Irvine; BFA in Dance from Tulane University; and Professional Diploma from Trinity-Laban Conservatoire in London, England. Prior to joining the faculty at the Cincinnati Ballet's Otto M. Budig Academy, she served as the Gustave L. Davis '59 and Sue Davis Director of Dance/Artist-in-Residence at Union College in Schenectady, NY (2022-24), and an Assistant Professor of Dance at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA (2013-22). www.flynndance.org

Kelli Forman - Creative Netwerk Executive Director - Kelli Forman is the Executive Director of Creative Netwerk and an international teaching artist, cultural strategist, and arts administrator working at the intersection of dance education, advocacy, and community

development. She is a Next Level USA cultural ambassador, participating in U.S. State Department cultural diplomacy initiatives that advance hip hop and street dance globally. As a professional dancer, her performance credits include X-Factor, Dancing With the Stars, America's Got Talent, Glee, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Coca-Cola, and Reebok. She holds a degree in Dance from the University of California Santa Barbara, where she advocated for greater diversity and inclusion in K–12 and collegiate dance education. Kelli has led and facilitated workshops, seminars, dance intensives, and conference presentations at universities including UMass Amherst, Dartmouth, Harvard, Drake, and UC Berkeley. As Executive Director, she oversees Creative Netwerk's national programming serving thousands of youth annually across school districts, universities, libraries, and civic institutions. She is a member of Creation Global, an international Chicago Footwork crew with over 100 members worldwide, and centers her work on advancing culturally rooted dance education as a tool for equity and community health.

Aquila Kikora Franklin, JD/MPA, is a Professor of Theatre/Dance and the Associate Director of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion for the Penn State School of Theatre where she teaches Intro to West African Dance, Hip Hop Theatre, jazz, and Mojah dance. Kikora has performed, choreographed and taught in cities across the globe including Linz, Austria, Grahamstown, South Africa, Dakar, Senegal, Minas Gerais, Brazil, throughout China, Europe, and the United States. In addition, she has choreographed and performed for the Atlanta Hawks Dance Team, Grammy Award Winning group Arrested Development, and renowned poet, Sonia Sanchez. Kikora's research is focused on developing and codifying the Mojah dance technique, an original style created by her mother, dancer/choreographer, Terrie Ajile Axam. Kikora is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Roots of Life Performing Arts Ensemble, an arts-education program in State College, Pennsylvania.

Meghan Frederick is a dance artist, educator, and scholar based in Philadelphia. Frederick completed her MFA at Temple University as a University Fellow and the recipient of the Katherine Dunham Award for Excellence in Creative Research. She currently teaches at Temple and Stockton Universities. Frederick's scholarship has been shared at City College of New York, The University of Belfast, and her presentation at the 2024 Dance Studies Association Conference in Buenos Aires was supported by the Adjunct Faculty Opportunity Fund at Stockton University. Frederick's artistic work explores choreographies of devotion and has recently been presented by Small Plates Choreography Festival (NY), Philadelphia Fringe Festival (PA), See Chicago Dance (IL), Space Gallery (ME), Movement Research, Brooklyn Studios for Dance, Arts on Site, Center for Performance Research, and STUFFED Dinner and Dance (all NYC). Frederick frequently collaborates on duet dances with Kate Seethaler which have been presented by The Cannonball Festival (PA), Loculus Studio (MA), The Engine (ME), VOX POPULI (PA), and Leah Stein Studio (PA). Frederick currently dances for Cardell Dance Theater (PA), was a member of the Brian Brooks Moving Company from 2008-2014 (NY) and has performed with many others. Meghan has two daughters who also love to dance.

Cari Freiberger is a Professor of Dance at Jacksonville University and teaches in the undergraduate Dance BFA and BA Programs and

MFA Choreography graduate program. She has choreographed contemporary and ballet pieces, and stages classical ballets. Her current academic and artistic research is in the field of Inclusive Arts. She received her early training at Washington School of Ballet, North Carolina School of the Arts, and Pennsylvania Ballet and performed with Alabama Ballet Company/Ballet South, Appalachian Ballet Company, Festival Ballet-Atlanta, and Ballet Company of Spokane and appeared as a guest artist for many projects including the Spoleto Festival-Charleston, the International Ballet Competition Gala-Jackson, the International Improvisational Festival-Birmingham, Adele Myers and Dancers-New Orleans, Several Dancer's Core- Atlanta, The People's Touring Project-NYC, and Sydney Olympics. She received her BA from Birmingham-Southern College and her MFA in dance at Florida State University where she was the recipient of the Suzanne Farrell Fellowship and the School of Visual Arts and Dance Teaching Fellowship. While her primary teaching focuses on advanced undergraduate ballet and graduate theory courses at JU online, she also teaches ballet at The Florida Ballet and other local studios. Her current interests focus on inclusive arts and she teaches dance classes for persons living with Parkinson's with training from the Mark Morris program, Inclusive Dance for all abilities with training from AXIS dance, and Yoga with a RYT 200hr certification. When not teaching or dancing you will most likely find her in or near the water or on her sailboat named 'Grand Jeté' !

Monica Cameron Frichtel (PhD, EdM) is an educator and researcher specializing in dance pedagogy, assessment, and curriculum. She is an Assistant Professor of Dance at the University of Delaware where she supports undergraduate research through capstone projects. She has had her research published in the Journal of Dance Education, Dance: Current selected research, and chapters in books edited by K. Bond, N. B. Schmitz, and K. Schupp & D. Risner. Dr. Frichtel serves as the treasurer and chair of the advocacy committee (2019-current) for the Pennsylvania Dance Education Organization, successfully advocating for direct path dance teacher certification in PA. She enjoys performing and founded and facilitates a community dance collective that attracts dancers, musicians, and visual artists.

G

Grace Gallagher is an educator, dancer, and creator whose creative research and engaged scholarship center inclusivity, access, and the power of community within dance education. She currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Dance at Colorado State University, where she teaches courses including Modern, Ballet, Pedagogy, Repertory and Ensemble, Repertory and Community Engagement, Methods for Teaching Dance, and Dances of the African Diaspora. She has previously taught at Arizona State University and Front Range Community College. Grace has extensive experience as a guest teaching artist and choreographer across diverse contexts, including public and private universities, community colleges, high schools, and hundreds of dance studios nationwide. She has hosted professional master classes and workshops, served as faculty for a national dance convention, and worked with nonprofit organizations that use dance as an emotional and creative outlet for underserved youth. Her choreographic work includes five original evening-length productions and has been presented at festivals such as Versatility Dance Festival, Detroit Dance Festival, New Century

Dance Project and the American College Dance Festival. Grace has received numerous awards including the Sharon Prize Colorado and CSU's Emerging Community Engagement Scholarship Award. She holds a BFA, MFA, Graduate Certificate in Dance Teaching Artist Praxis, and PreK–12 Dance Teaching Certification.

Catherine Gallant (dancer, choreographer, educator, curriculum writer, filmmaker) was the assistant director at 92Y Harkness Dance Center from 1994-96, just as DEL was beginning, and has been on the faculty of the Dance Education Laboratory since 2003. She also teaches at Hunter College in the Arnhold Graduate Dance Education Program. As a choreographer, she has presented her work with Catherine Gallant/DANCE at the 92nd Street Y Harkness Dance Center, WestFest, and the American Dance Guild. Catherine is also the director of Dances by Isadora, which, since 1989, performs, teaches, and collaborates with dancers throughout the world. They have appeared on the Jacob's Pillow's Inside/Out Series, Battery Dance Festival, and at Green-Wood Cemetery. Catherine appears in the US version of Jerome Bel's Isadora Duncan. She began her study of the technique of Isadora Duncan in 1982 with Julia Levien and is a founding member of the Duncan Archive. Catherine was the dance educator at PS 89 in Manhattan from 1998-2023. She and her students were featured in the Emmy-nominated PBS documentary, PS DANCE! As a dance curriculum writer, she has worked with Ailey Arts in Education, Merce Cunningham Trust and Dance Theatre of Harlem. Ms. Gallant is a graduate of the Boston Conservatory and holds an MFA in Dance from Temple University.

Misti Galvan is a dance artist and educator based in San Marcos, Texas. She holds an MFA in Choreography, a BFA in Dance, and a BA in English. Her dance background includes training and influence from both New York and the Chicago areas, while her artistic work is interdisciplinary, incorporating text, visual art, film, and other media. Galvan has taught or presented at the Texas Dance Improvisation Festival (TDIF), Texas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (TAHPERD), the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), Asheville Fringe Festival, and more. Galvan teaches in the dance division at Austin Community College and Texas State University. She is a doctoral candidate in Adult, Professional, and Community Education at Texas State, with research exploring the intersection of Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process and Contact Improvisation. She became a certified facilitator of Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process in February 2026. Galvan is a Stage 3 rectal cancer survivor and has been an active member of Dance Educators Living Through Cancer (DELC) since May 2022. The DELC collective is in the final stages of developing a book aimed at supporting others navigating the complexities of cancer diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship.

Sabrina Geoffrion is the Community Life Associate at Hacienda at the Canyon in Tucson, Arizona where part of her role is to teach creative movement for assisted living/memory care groups. She is also the co-Founder, Vice President and Repertory Company Director for Dancesequences Inc. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology, with a minor in dance, and her Master's degree in Cognitive Psychology from the University of Arizona. Since 2006 she has taught psychology online through Grand Canyon University. She has conducted academic research at the University of Arizona with the Program for Integrative

Medicine with Dr. Andrew Weil, the Psychology Department, and Psychiatry Department in the College of Medicine. Sabrina has danced since childhood, studying, ballet, jazz, contemporary, African dance, creative dance, and Butoh. She has taught people of all ages from preschool and to elders. She is currently part of Mettler Studio's Mettler-based Dance Educator Apprentice Program and continues to look for ways to combine her passion for dance and movement expression with her love of teaching and helping others.

Maria Krey Gibson (MKG) Maria Krey Gibson (MKG) is a Filipino American immigrant and a passionate public school educator devoted to inspiring creative expression from all her students. MKG was a part of the first graduating class with a B. A. in dance education (2011) from the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO). She returned to UCO to complete an M.ed in secondary education in 2018. MKG performed with Perpetual Motion Modern and Aerial Dance Company in between degrees. MKG taught in the Oklahoma City Public School District for eight years. She pioneered the dance program at Douglass Mid High School, where she was the 2018- 2019 Teacher of the Year. MKG started the dance program at Putnam City High School in 2019. Her passion for creative expression as a healing modality led her to earn a 200-hour yoga teacher certification from Soul Yoga in 2019. MKG was the chair of the 2020 Oklahoma State Department of Education Frameworks writing team for the Oklahoma Fine Arts Standards in dance. She also co-wrote the elementary dance ArTech curriculum. MKG is currently working on a certification in Healing Touch, a practice for caring for energy biofield. This work has inspired her to take a more investigative approach to her relationship to movement from her indigenous heritage.

Miriam Giguere holds a BA in psychology and MS in Education from the University of Pennsylvania and a PhD in dance from Temple University. Dr. Giguere heads the Performing Arts Department at Drexel University. Her work on cognition and social interaction during the creative process in dance has been published in Arts Education Policy Review, Journal of Dance Education, Arts & Learning Journal, Research in Dance Education and the International Journal of Education and the Arts, among others. She is the associate editor of Dance Education in Practice, where she writes the Dance Trends column. Dr. Giguere is the President of the Pennsylvania Dance Education Organization and the author of the textbook Beginning Modern Dance.

Lindsay Gilmour is a performer, dancemaker, filmmaker, and educator. Her most recent works delve into embodying local landscapes and our need for wild untamed spaces exploring the interconnected and reciprocal relationship between body and earth through the Discipline of Authentic Movement. Her dance films partner with diverse landscapes including desert, old grove forests, ocean, and suburban neighborhoods. The films have been screened both nationally and internationally, most recently at Dance Camera West in Los Angeles, Dance Camera Istanbul and In Shadow in Lisbon, Portugal. Lindsay has an MA from Columbia University in International and Public Affairs focusing on Tibetan Studies and Conflict Resolution and an MFA from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She is the recipient of a Nehru Fulbright Award for Academic and Professional Excellence (2018) and a Hellman Fellowship (2020-2021) in support of her research exploring the preservation, adaptation, and innovation of Ritual Dance in Vajrayana

Buddhist Nunneries and Monasteries in India. Lindsay is on the Board of Core of Culture, a non-profit dedicated to safeguarding intangible world culture and assisting the continuity of ancient dance traditions and embodied spiritual practice. Currently she is studying with the Circles of Four, a collective body of teachers in Discipline of Authentic Movement.

Lauren Haughton Gillis is an international director and choreographer rooted in musical theatre tradition and committed to advancing the form through contemporary, collaborative practice. She has produced, directed, and choreographed for Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS across the U.S. and Canada with the national touring companies of Hamilton, Wicked, Beautiful: The Carole King Musical, and The Book of Mormon. She currently maintains international productions as a director/choreographer for Virgin Voyages and made her New York directing debut at The Cutting Room with the new musical The Magic Hummingbird. Her directing and choreography credits include work with La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego Musical Theatre, Diversionary Theatre, Utah Festival Opera & Musical Theatre, and Forestburgh Playhouse. She trained with Tony Award–winning director/choreographer Graciela Daniele at The Old Globe.
As a performer, Lauren appeared on Broadway in Wicked and in original casts directed by Tommy Tune, with works by Leslie Bricusse and Maury Yeston. Lauren is BFA Director of Music Theatre at Florida State University, previously on faculty at Indiana University Department of Theatre & Dance, where she received the 2022 Trustees Teaching Award. She serves as President of the Musical Theatre Educators' Alliance International. She holds a BFA from Syracuse University and an MFA from San Diego State University.

Terry Goetz is Director of the Creative Dance Center (CDC) in Seattle. A former member of Pacific Northwest Ballet (1988-1995) and Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre (1986-1988), she performed works by Balanchine, Petipa, Bournonville, Tudor, Tetley, Taylor, Limon, Lubovitch, Dendy, Cunningham, and Naharin. Since 2005, Terry has presented workshops nationally and internationally in BrainDance and Brain-Compatible Dance Education. In addition to teaching creative dance classes for ages 0-5 and their grown-ups, she teaches ballet to children and teens at CDC, and is a teaching artist in schools and community settings. She has presented at daCi conferences in Taiwan, Denmark, and Australia. Terry was named Washington State Dance Educator of the Year in 2015.

Thelma Larkin Goldberg founded The Dance Inn, a suburban private-sector dance studio serving more than 400 students weekly, in 1983. She regularly teaches at dance teacher events, including the National Dance Educator Organization's annual conferences and the Boston Tap Party. She received the 2015 Dr. Michael Shannon Dance Champion Award from the Boston Dance Alliance for “her sustained excellence in teaching and passionate advocacy for the art of tap dancing.” Thelma received her PhD in Educational Studies from Lesley University in 2020. Her research centers around the experience of the tap dance educator in the private-sector dance studio. Recent research has focused on integrating tap history lessons into traditional movement-centered tap classes in the private sector and higher education settings. She joined the faculty at Dean College in 2021, where she is actively engaged in training future tap dance educators.

Brian Golden is a neurodivergent choreographer and movement director based between Los Angeles and New York. His work transforms disability aesthetics, sensory experience, and object-based performance into immersive, surreal environments. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Performance from Chapman University and is currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts in Choreography at the California Institute of the Arts, with minors in Pedagogy and Integrated Media. A MAP Fund recipient, Brian will premiere a new immersive work in 2027. Brian is the inaugural Research Fellow of BEMOVING, where he researches disability and accessibility in performance spaces across the United States. He is also a teaching artist at The Broad Museum, where he leads movement explorations that connect paintings and sculptures to the body, allowing the themes of visual art to be explored physically and cognitively. Recent highlights include a choreographic fellowship at Jacob's Pillow, a residency at Catskill Art Space, and a residency with Dance Lab New York, where he created Snap, Clap, Flush for a cast of disabled and non-disabled performers. His work has been presented at The Joyce Theater as part of the Martha Graham Dance Company, Battery Dance Festival, SCI-Arc, New Century Dance Project, and the McCallum Choreography Festival.

Cristina Goletti - Artist, academic leader, and educator, Cristina Goletti is the Dean of the College of Performing and Visual Arts at the University of Northern Colorado (UNCO). Previous appointments include Chair of the Theatre and Dance Department at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), and Chair of the Arts Department at Universidad De Las Americas Puebla, Mexico. Cristina served as president of World Dance Alliance USA and is currently on the board of the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) and Colorado Humanities. From 2007-2014 she co-directed Legitimate Bodies Dance Company and I.F. O.N.L.Y. Dance Festival in Ireland. Legitimate Bodies Dance Company has toured to some of the most important venues and festival in Europe and Mexico like Aerowaves at The Robin Howard Theatre London, Dance House Limassol, Auditorium Theatre Rome, the European Parliament in Brussels, Tanzmesse Dusseldorf, the Dublin Absolute Festival, the Black Box at the National School of Contemporary Dance in Mexico City and Casa de la Cultura in Tijuana. Cristina's research interests lie in dance pedagogy, interdisciplinary performance practices and leadership studies. She has presented her creative and scholarly work and taught workshops and lectures at several conferences and universities in the USA, Australia, New Zealand, and Latin America. Her awards include "DanceWEB European Scholarship", several awards from the NEA, The Irish Arts Council, Culture Ireland and the European Cultural Foundation. She holds an MFA in Dance & Choreography from the University of Colorado at Boulder with a secondary emphasis in Somatic Studies and a Postgraduate Diploma from the London Contemporary Dance School. As a dancer, she performed works by Hofesh Schechter, Jonathan Lunn, Charles Linehan, Maresa Von Stockert, Arno Schuitemaker, Darrell Jones and Yann Lheraux amongst others. Passionate for interdisciplinary research and collaboration, at UTEP she was part of the interdisciplinary research group Engineering + Art + Science = Social Impact (EASSI), which was granted start-up funding and the use of space at UTEP's new interdisciplinary building. Also at UTEP, she collaborated with the Africana Studies Department and the Rubin Center to create

joint hires that reflected curricular innovation rooted in social justice. As a Dean at UNCO, she has overseen a restructuring of the organization of the college to improve the support for their performing season, worked alongside faculty to create new open-access programs in the School of Music, including the BA in LatinX Music, which is the first program in the country to center musical traditions from Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean. Cristina is an effective fundraiser, having fundraised over $3 million for UNCO, including the biggest gift the college has ever received for their main gallery and the School of Art and Design.

Sarah Williams Gonzales is a “dancing historian” a dance scholar, and a dance educator. A native of Indianapolis, Indiana, Sarah began her dance training at Jordan College Academy of Dance, the former pre-professional program of Butler University. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance Performance/Choreography and French (Magna Cum Laude) from Hope College. In 2012, Sarah graduated with distinction from the University of New Mexico with a Master of Arts in Theatre and Dance with a concentration in Dance History and Criticism. Sarah lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she works as an Adjunct Lecturer at the University of New Mexico, Education Faculty at Keshet Dance and Center for the Arts, and Grants Administrator at the National Institute of Flamenco.

Melonie Grasty-Vazquez is from a musical family but preferred to learn to dance. Having rhythm as a natural part of her family and community, she did well learning tap, jazz, modern and ballet. Due to not being very flexible, flamenco was the best form of dance where she could dance with rhythm and not worry about doing splits. She studied for 20 plus years in the Los Angeles area, Seville, and Jerez de la frontera Spain before deciding to open a school for teaching flamenco. To ensure that her students learn correctly, she earned a Master's Degree in Flamencology from ESMUC, (Escolar Superior de Musica de Catalunya) from Barcelona, Spain. Teaching and choreographing is her passion and it has brought her great joy to see her dancers dance in local festivals, and community events yearly. She has a annual flamenco show inviting professionals to dance in the same show as het students giving students the opportunity to see their future in dance. She is a recent recipient of the Burbank Cultural Arts Grant to provide a flamenco show in the city of Burbank enhancing the knowledge of flamenco to the community.

Les Gray - Dr. Gray’s primary research area focuses on Black cultural production and its relationship to trauma and terror. Through the lens of performance, they approach framed and unframed events ranging from plays and blues dancing to police brutality videos. Dr. Gray considers performances of spectacular pain alongside the potential for care, joy, healing, and solidarity. While they pursue scholarship deeply invested in what it means to be and facilitate ethical cultural producers, Dr. Gray’s work and theory is continually underscored by embodied knowledge and highlighting representations of intersectional identities which include race, sexuality, class, disability, and gender. Their work is embedded in and indebted to Black radical feminism, queer theory, and disability studies. Dr. Gray is a dramaturg, director, collaborator, writer, and occasional performer.

H

Shana Habel, MA, is a K-12 Arts Specialist for the Los Angeles Unified School District where she supervises and supports K-12 dance educators and programming. She has taught dance at the elementary, secondary and post-secondary levels for many years and currently teaches aspiring elementary educators at Loyola Marymount University about the power of dance as a tool for learning. Shana is a past-president of CDEA and served as a member of the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards writing team in Dance. She is a Lester Horton Award recipient and an active member of the International Teaching Artist's Collaborative Climate Collective. Shana currently serves on the Board of the Language of Dance Center and is a happy Master Practitioner in the Language of Dance.

Amanda Hamp is Associate Professor of Dance (History and Criticism; Contemporary Dance) at the University of New Mexico and serves as Associate Dean of Faculty Equity and Excellence in the College of Fine Arts. In her administrative role, she works with departments and college leadership on faculty equity initiatives, including hiring practices, tenure and promotion processes, workload equity, and workplace climate. As a scholar and educator, Hamp teaches and writes at the intersection of contemporary dance practice and dance studies. Her research engages questions of choreography, somatic practice, and critical response within contemporary performance, and her work reflects sustained engagement with archival research and interdisciplinary inquiry. Hamp brings a systems-level perspective to conversations about curriculum, program design, and institutional change. Her work focuses on how academic structures and faculty policies can support rigorous, sustainable pathways for diverse dance forms and student populations within higher education. In the context of this panel, she contributes insight into aligning equity goals with institutional practice and long-term program sustainability.

Stephen Hankey, MS - A native of Trinidad and Tobago, Stephen Hankey is a dancer, master teacher in traditional Caribbean folk forms, Artistic Director, and choreographer. Mr. Hankey teaches at the Cooperative Arts & Humanities High School and is an Adjunct Professor at Central Connecticut State University. Stephen holds a Master of Science in Teacher Leadership from Central Connecticut State University and a B.F.A. from the Hartt School, University of Hartford. Stephen is the President and Artistic Director of The Island Reflections Dance Theatre, Inc., in Hartford, CT, and was a founding member, choreographer, and performer of The National Dance Theatre Company of Trinidad and Tobago.
His choreography credits include J'ouvert (1995), Road March (1997), A Brighter Day (1998) and Red House Fire! Fire! (1999) for the Baggasse Company; Bassman with the Signal Hill Theater Workshop Tobago (1997); Hewanorra Story for the St. Lucia Research Center and Jen S. Designs (1997); the "Voodoo Ceremony" for the ABC television film Production Creature, by Peter Benchley with Trilogy Entertainment North Ltd. (1997); and Ti Jean and His Brothers for Trinity College (2000). He has collaborated with Indiana State University, Trinity College, and Yale on special assignments, and has performed extensively nationally and internationally.

Professor Jin Lee Hanley is a dance artist who serves as Chair of the Department of Dance at Palm Beach Atlantic University, where she has taught since 2005. She also sits on the Board of Directors for the Florida Dance Education Organization and is Chair of the National Honor Society for Dance Arts (FL). Professor Hanley grew up in A-san, South Korea, and started her classical ballet training at age 16. She won her first National Dance Competition title while still in high school, placed fourth at the National Korean College Competition, and began dancing professionally at age 21. She graduated from Kong-Ju National University with her Bachelor's degree and secondary education teaching license. After college, Professor Hanley moved to New York City to dance and study, graduating from New York University in 2003 with a Master';s degree in Dance and Dance Education, attending Merce Cunningham's modern dance studio as a scholarship student, and serving as Director of Dance for Little Flock Church. She later became certified as a second-generation Pilates master, qualified to teach other instructors seeking Pilates certification. Professor Hanley also continues to regularly attend dance intensives at places such as the Julliard School, Limon Dance Company, and Ad Deum Dance Company. As a performer, Professor Hanley's professional experience includes working as principal dancer with Park Sunyoung Ballet Company in South Korea, and dancing with Hasadim Mission Ballet Company (South Korea), Columbia Ballet Theatre (Spokane, WA), and H.T.Chen and Dancers (New York, NY). She has worked with renowned choreographers including Douglas Dunn, Randall Flinn, Sungyong Kim, and Jeanguy Saintus Riché. She has performed in numerous locations across the U.S., South Korea, and Europe. Ms. Hanley has choreographed over 120 works, served as resident choreographer for the World Missions Conference in New York City, and taught master classes for various events and organizations, including the American College Dance Festival, National Dance Education Organization, and Project Dance. Over the course of her career, Professor Hanley has gained high acclaim as a leading modern dance artist and teacher, recognized for her distinctive flowing movement quality and deep artistic spirit. However, her extensive performance and teaching experience in, and great love for, ballet and other performance styles help her to connect with students from all dance and cultural backgrounds. More than anything she loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and worships through dance wherever she is called. She loves being the mother of Joshu and Lydia, who are also artists. With her husband Drew, they worship at Providencia Church, West Palm Beach, FL.

Mary Harding MAED, BA, has led the dance program at Perpich Arts High School since 1990. She was 2002 National Dance Teacher of the Year. Her research, "Peer Coaching in the Arts Classroom", published in the June 2009 edition of JODE, received multiple awards. Her article, "Assessment in the High School Technique Class - Creating Thinking Dancers", was published in the August 2012 edition of JODE. Harding was a member of the MN Standards writing team and the NCCAS writing team. She is the dance education specialist at the Perpich Center, supporting dance educators across Minnesota. Harding serves on the NDEO policy board. Her interests lie in K-12 dance standards, equity and access in curriculum development, and supporting emerging K-12 teachers through professional development.

Madeline Jazz Harvey is a dance educator, choreographer, and performer specializing in classical and contemporary ballet. She began

her performance career at age fourteen as an apprentice with Charlotte Ballet and went on to dance as a principal dancer with Hernan Justo's Carolina Ballet Theatre. She became a member of Judy Bejarano's IMPACT Dance Company in May 2020. Madeline has been teaching and choreographing since 2006 in a variety of studio and collegiate settings. Her choreography has been featured in concerts and festivals across the nation. Madeline holds a BA and Professional Training Certificate in Dance from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, and an MFA in Choreography from Jacksonville University. Human connection and vulnerability drive her creative process.

Katrina Hawley is an adjunct faculty member in the Dance Department at the University of Hartford, where she teaches Movement Fundamentals, Functional Kinetic Patterns, Dance Kinesiology, Issues in Pedagogy, and Pilates. She brings over 25 years of experience as a movement scientist, educator, and artist to her work in higher education and professional teacher training. Hawley is co-owner of The Pilates Studio in Hadley, Massachusetts, a Polestar Pilates Educator, and an Oov Educator who travels nationally to train movement professionals. She holds an AA in Musical Theater from Western Wyoming College, a BFA in Dance from Temple University, and certification as a Certified Movement Analyst (CMA) through the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies. She has studied extensively with Brent Anderson, Shelly Power, Martha Eddy, Janice Pforsich, Charlotte Wile, and Dr. Daniel Vladeta, and is a candidate for certification to teach the Bill Evans Technique. Her research explores the learning processes of the late adolescent brain and seeks to reimagine how dance kinesiology is taught to embody functional improvement in technique. She presented “Rigorous Play: Maximizing the Development of the Late Adolescent Brain” at the Evans Somatic Dance Conference (2024) and “Innovative Lower Extremity Conditioning Techniques” at the National Dance Education Organization Conference (2025). Hawley has received the Gordon Clark Ramsey Award for Creative Excellence (2014) and the Sustained Excellence in Teaching Award (2023). Earlier in her career, she co-directed HawleyMartin Dance, presenting original works in Boston, New York City, and Massachusetts. Her teaching philosophy emphasizes empathy, embodied inquiry, and the role of play in learning, celebrating the beauty and vulnerability inherent in the artistic process.

Sylvia Henao is a multidisciplinary artist and dance education professional from Bogotá, Colombia. She earned dual B.A. degrees from Universidad de Los Andes in Bogotá, Colombia, in Art History and Fine Arts. Her profound interest and commitment to classical ballet have led her to pursue holistic dance education in Academia. In 2019, she received her M.A. degree in Teaching Dance in the Professions: The American Ballet Theatre Pedagogy from New York University and obtained full certification in the American Ballet Theatre National Training Curriculum (Pre-Primary to Level 7 & Partnering). Sylvia is a recipient of the Fulbright Minciencias Grant, awarded by Comisión Fulbright Colombia, to pursue her doctoral degree in the United States, and is currently a doctoral student in the Ed.D. Dance Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. Sylvia has worked as a ballet teacher in early childhood education centers and private ballet studios, was the Ballet Hispánico Teachers College Dance Education Scholar in Residence from 2022 to 2024, and her research interests revolve around the

educational dynamics in the private sector, the teacher profile and their teaching practice in concert dance, and holistic and progressive approaches in ballet education, aiming to dismantle authoritarian and patriarchal pedagogical methods.

Eilish Henderson (B.S. Hofstra University | M.A. New York University) is a movement artist, choreographer, and educator working with subjects of the body based in NYC. She is interested in nourishing the collective practice of translation through the written word, movement, and drawing. Her work has been presented as a part of WADE Dance Festival, Emerging Artists Festival: New Works Series, Smush Gallery, Arts, Letters, and Numbers, and Agropoli Dance Festival in Italy. She has been granted artist residencies with Arts, Letters, and Numbers, Peaked Hill Trust, and Homeport Art House. As an educator, she is an Adjunct Dance Professor at Westchester Community College and Iona University and works in NYC public schools as a Teaching Artist for the Joyce Theater, Dancewave, and Brooklyn Arts Council.

Matthew Henley, PhD, MFA is Associate Professor of Dance Education and Affiliated Researcher in the Arnhold Institute for Dance Education Research, Policy & Leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University. Henley's research describes the cognitive and social-emotional skills associated with dance education. Henley's interests include enactive cognition in the arts, developmental and neuroscientific approaches to embodied knowing, research methods for pedagogy, and the pedagogy of research methods. Henley danced professionally in New York City with Sean Curran Company and Randy James Dance Works. Henley earned his doctorate in Educational Psychology: Learning Sciences from the University of Washington, and M.F.A. in Dance from the same institution. He is an Associate Editor of JoDE.

Adelita Dixon-Hernandez - Adelita attained her K -12th Dance Education teaching Certificate, and has taught dance in the public school system for 18yrs. She is the mother of two beautiful children. Adelita is currently one of two dance educators at Capitol Hill High School where she founded the program in 2008. Adelita is also the Mexican Folklorico dance director at Everything Goes Dance Studio where her vision of a contemporary flare for Folklorico is created. Her accomplishments include Capitol Hill High School's Teacher of the Year, Multi-Cultural Teacher of the Year and the state Fine Arts Educator of the Year. Adelita is proud to say she was selected as one of the team of educators who wrote objective analysis for the Oklahoma state dance standards. Adelita spent over 10 years dancing and performing as one of the principal dancers with Norahua Mexican Folklorico Dancers of Oklahoma under the direction of Jaime Fuentes. Her husband Marcos Hernandez who she met dancing in the Company was her Folkloric partner; they still love dancing together to this day. Adelita has studied with professor Isidro Salas of Houston Texas, and was the official contemporary director for the world famous dance company Compania Folklorico Alegria Mexicana. She is an internationally known choreographer in the area of Mexican Folkloric Dance. Her choreography has been featured in Mexico's Festival Del Mundo, various award winning Mexican Folkloric Dance Companies in Texas, and at the International Festival in Disneyland.

Rebecca Herrin most recently served as Lecturer at the University of Oklahoma School of Dance, teaching ballet performance,

pedagogy, and general education courses. Her research explores power dynamics in ballet pedagogy, with a focus on fostering dancer agency through Movement Behavior Analysis developed by Valerie Hunt. A former professional dancer, she joined OU's faculty in 2005 and holds an MFA in Dance from Montclair State University and an MBA from the University of Oklahoma. She received the Yvonne Chouteau Outstanding Faculty Award in 2021 and has contributed to programs across Ballet, Musical Theatre, Modern Dance, and Opera.

Chelsea Hilding (she/they) is an Assistant Professor of Dance at Wake Forest University. A choreographer, educator, and researcher, her work bridges pedagogy, somatic practices, and historical inquiry. She holds an MFA in Choreography from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she also served as Lecturer in Ballet, Dance History, and Dance Education, and is a Ph.D. Candidate in Dance at Texas Woman's University. Hilding's research investigates dance pedagogy through archival and cultural analysis, focusing on how early twentieth-century ideologies of physical culture and eugenics shaped dance education. She has presented papers such as Correcting Bodies: Eugenics Rhetoric and Twentieth-Century Ballet Manuals at national and international conferences including Dance Studies Association, CORPS de Ballet International, and the National Dance Education Organization. As a dance artist and administrator, Hilding has served as Artistic Director of Braided Light Dance Project, Resident Choreographer for the St. Augustine Ballet, and Company Manager for Gibney Company in New York. She is the founder of Screen Door Dance Room, a studio dedicated to adult dancers, and serves on the Board of Directors for Jacksonville Dance Theatre and the Advisory Board for Obremski/Works. She is also certified in Pilates, Yoga, and Progressing Ballet Technique.

Peggy Hongduc Nguyen, a Vietnamese-American Angeleno and life-long student of Dance, is trained in various movement traditions and educational pedagogies by Melba Morris Ballet, LA County HS for the Arts, UCLA's World Arts & Cultures Dance B.A., Malaya Filipino American Dance, UCLA Masters and Teacher Credential Program, Language of Dance® (LOD), Pasadena Lindy Groove, Luna Dance Institute, Mettler Studios, and a National Board Certification in Early and Middle Childhood P.E/Dance. After 16+ years serving as a credentialed elementary multi-subject and Dance teacher, she continues to grow in her purpose, craft, and leadership thanks to her LAUSD Dance sisters, the most loving partner and kids, and the tremendous creative and cultural wealth her students bring every day.

Camila Honorio is a first-year PhD student in Fine Arts (Theatre Track) at Texas Tech University, specializing in History, Theory, and Criticism and Arts Administration. She holds an MA in Teaching from CEUNES, a Specialization in Dance and Body Awareness, and a BA in Dance from UFRJ. A native of Rio de Janeiro, Camila spent seven years as a professor at Centro Universitário Vale do Cricaré, where she led the "Elo Capixaba" project, a research initiative focused on Forró Pé de Serra funded by FAPES. She is the co-founder of the Forropocá dance school and has served as both an instructor and judge at the prestigious National Forró Festival of Itaúnas (FENFIT). Her professional background includes performing in the Rio 2016 Olympics Closing Ceremony and producing the "UniversiEncontro de Dança Carioxaba," a cultural event supported by FUNCULTURA-ES.

As a prolific researcher, she has published three guides, two book chapters, and five articles in Brazil over the last six years. Her work bridges the gap between traditional Brazilian dance forms, pedagogy, and arts administration, reflecting a deep commitment to dance education and community engagement.

I

Kaoru Ikeda, Artistic Director/Dancer/Choreographer of MoustacheCat Dance, a member of the Board of Directors at American Dance Guild, Dance Teacher at New Amsterdam School, and Movement Specialist at The First Presbyterian Church Nursery School. Kaoru is originally from Japan and graduated from Nihon University College of Art in Japan with a BA and New York University Tisch School of the Arts with an MFA in Dance. Kaoru has trained, performed, choreographed, and taught dance internationally for over two decades. In addition, she founded MoustacheCat Dance in NYC. Her projects focus on bringing awareness to social issues and abandoned history and are dedicated to serving human dignity, with a particular focus on Asian and Asian American communities in the U.S. and elsewhere. She has received grants from Asian Women Giving Circle and the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council. Through her international experiences, she has come to believe that dance and movement can unite people no matter how different we may think we are. So, she becomes a dance educator/movement teacher to share the joy of dance and movement with the students in NYC.

J

Katherine Jiménez is a dynamic force in the world of dance—an educator, performer, choreographer, and community advocate celebrated for blending Afro-Latin roots with classical and contemporary styles. Born and raised in New York City, she began her training at The Ailey School and later graduated from the Professional Performing Arts High School (PPAS) and New York University's Steinhardt School, where she studied Dance Education. With over two decades of experience, she has trained under esteemed NY Style Mambo masters and across diverse techniques, developing a voice that honors culture while embracing innovation. She has toured and performed since childhood, shaping her artistry through early professional experiences on stage. Katherine is recognized as a pioneering NY Style Mambo instructor, becoming the first NY Style Mambo Instructor at the Ailey Institution ten years ago and helping bring this cultural form into a premier dance institution. She currently teaches at NYU, sharing Afro-Latin and Afro-Caribbean dance, history, and culture. Her performance career spans international stages and iconic NYC venues such as City Center, Radio City Music Hall, The United Palace, Hostos, and Lincoln Center, alongside legends including Johnny Pacheco, Willie Colón, and Andy Montañez. Committed to accessibility, she founded KJon2.com, a virtual platform offering live and on-demand dance classes worldwide. Featured in major media outlets and serving as an advocate for Afro-Caribbean culture, Katherine is known for breaking down complex movements with clarity. Her mission is to use dance to foster wellness, cultural pride, empowerment, and community.

Elizabeth Johnson (MFA, GL-CMA, M.AmSAT, RSME/T, RYT200) is a performer, choreographer, educator, Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analyst, certified Teacher of the Alexander Technique (AmSAT & ATI), Registered Somatic Movement Therapist, and Registered Yoga Teacher. Her greatest professional joys are making dances and synthesizing and teaching dance/movement pedagogies and somatics that center developmental movement, prosocial/trauma-informed education, and critical perspectives. Her dances often explore the dynamics of intimacy, exhaustion, and transcendence through rigorous yet somatic physicality and straightforward, egalitarian partnering that challenge tropes regarding propriety and popular culture's obsession with objectifying, exaggerating, and disfiguring the (particularly female) body. She danced professionally with NYC-based companies Molly Rabinowitz Liquid Grip, Sara Hook Dances, and David Parker and The Bang Group and, for over a decade, directed her critically acclaimed, Milwaukee-based dance company, Your Mother Dances. Johnson teaches nationally and internationally and writes/co-writes book chapters featuring applied somatics. With co-writers Rebecca Nettl-Fiol and Luc Vanier, she has an upcoming book on an emergent movement analysis tool distilled from the Alexander Technique and the Dart Procedures called Framework for Integration. Johnson is Chair of the Department of Dance at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County UMBC.

Carlos R.A. Jones - A strong advocate for the arts, Carlos R. A. Jones has enjoyed a vibrant career as educator, performer, director, choreographer and scholar. He is professor of dance and department chair at Brockport State University. Prior to arriving at Brockport, Jones held tenure at Buffalo State where his held several including Interim dean of the school of Arts and Humanities, coordinator of Africana Studies, and associate dean of a merged School of Arts and Sciences. Professor Jones has also served on the faculty at Chapman University, Loyola Marymount University, UCLA, St. Cloud State University, and University of California-Irvine. His teaching has reached K-12 students at the Buffalo Academy for Visual and Performing Arts, Tapestry Charter School, M.U.S.E., and Bethune Theaterdanse/Infinite Dreams, a California based not for-profit dance company specializing in dance classes for youth with accessibility needs. In the private sector, Jones founded and directed the Los Angeles dance training facility Academy 331 Fine Arts Center. He was founding artistic director of Teen Dance Company of the Bay Area, artistic advisor to In-sync Youth Dance Theater, and a resident artist for Pliein children's dance company. Jones' research and scholarship is in Black American dance with a focus on the jazz dance continuum. This has been realized in a number of dance compositions and in two groundbreaking books. His writing can be found in Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches and in the award winning Rooted Jazz Dance: Africanists Aesthetics and Equity in the Twenty-First Century, of which he was also co-editor. Mr. Jones spent his early career working as performer, director and choreographer in concert dance, musical theater, television and film. He landed in the movies I'll Do Anything, Dance With Me, and Uptown Girls and was featured on the television series Cybill, Howie, the Nanny, and the Drew Carey Show. Among his theatrical credits are Some Like it Hot, Man of La Mancha, It's a Pretty Good Life and Sesame Street Live, to name a few. Theatrical directing and choreography credits include: Hairspray, The

Magnolia Ballet, Beehive, Don't Bother Me I Can't Cope, Camelot, Four Guys Named José, American Rhapsody, History of White Music, Saucy Jack and the Space Vixens, West Side Story, Black Nativity, She Hysteric a one woman show with SNL veteran Ellen Gleghorne, Once Upon a Mattress under the direction of television icon Carol Burnet and Hairdirected by Broadway legend Andé DeShields. In addition, he has created dance segments for television and film; including the award winning film short, Insurance Inc. Jones has created concert dance works that can be seen in the repertoires of Rhythmically Speaking, Jazz Antiqua Dance and Music Ensemble, Movement Source, Dance Spectrum Alaska, Adage Repertory, and his self-named, Carlos Jones and Company.

Enya-Kalia Jordan is a choreographer, researcher, scholar, and teaching-artist, from Brooklyn, New York. Currently, She is Manager of Dancer Development & Diversity for the Radio City Rockettes at MSG Entertainment. She artistically directs a movement-based artist collective, Enya Kalia Creations, and co-produces a collaborative performance project, Bashi Arts, with Rachel DeForrest Repinz. She received a Bachelor of Arts from SUNY Buffalo State and a Master of Fine Arts from Temple University. In 2020, she began her doctoral studies at Texas Woman's University, researching the decolonization of dance, Black embodiment, and equitable dancer development. She presented her research twice at the Collegium of African Diasporic Dance at Duke University, five times at the National Dance Education events, thrice at Dance For the Child International conference, and the Decolonizing Tertiary Dance Education conference hosted by Stockholm University. In addition, she has conducted ethnographic research in Tokyo, Japan; Guimaraes, Portugal; Amsterdam, Holland, Netherlands; and Paris, France. Enya-Kalia is a teaching-artist with Dancewave, Amanda Selwyn's Notes in Motion Outreach Theatre, Abron’s Center for the Arts, and the Brooklyn Academy of Music's Dance Africa program. She has also been invited to teach at Bates Dance Festival, been an assistant professor at SUNY Erie, and lecturer at the University of Virginia. Enya believes in the multiplicity of dance and being, meaning in everything she does, there is a dance.

Erika Julian is a dance educator, choreographer, and interdisciplinary teacher whose work focuses on embodied learning, access, and community-centered pedagogy. She teaches across lecture and studio-based dance courses and has worked in university, K–12, studio, and community dance settings. Her teaching integrates movement, reflection, and play as tools for fostering student engagement and belonging. Her recent research examines vulnerability as a pedagogical strategy, drawing on student survey data to explore how shared movement experiences influence participation, retention, and classroom climate. She is particularly interested in how cross-sector collaboration among dance educators can strengthen inclusive practices and reduce competition between programs within the same community. Erika has presented at regional, national and international conferences and is committed to creating learning environments where dancers of varied abilities, backgrounds, and identities can thrive.

K

Dr. Yoav Kaddar is a Professor of Dance, the director of the West Virginia University Dance

Program, the WVU Summer Dance Academy, and founding member and immediate-past president of the WV Dance Education Organization. He received his BFA from The Juilliard School, MFA from University of Washington, Seattle, and his PhD in Educational Administration and Leadership from the University at Albany, NY. He has been a member of the Jose Limon, Paul Taylor and Pilobolus dance companies to name a few. Dr. Kaddar has choreographed over 70 works for dance and theatre, is a Fulbright Scholar and continues to teach and perform nationally and abroad. He has been a member of the American College Dance Association Board of Directors and has served on the US Fulbright Selection Committee for the Arts.

Elizabeth Kattner, Ph.D holds a B.A. in Anthropology and a Master of Music in Dance from the University of Nevada Las Vegas, and a Ph.D. in Humanities from the Free University Berlin. She is a Professor of Dance at Oakland University and serves as Associate Director for the School of Music, Theatre and Dance, coordinating assessment and accreditation for all three departments. She is also coordinator of the K-12 Dance Education program. Prior to coming to Oakland, Dr. Kattner taught Dance, Choreography, Dance Education, Pedagogy, Dance Studies, Study Abroad in Germany, and Dance History at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, the Free University Berlin, and the University of Michigan-Flint. She danced professional both in the US and in Europe and is an active choreographer. Her work has been presented at American College Dance Festiva Association, the Uferstudios Center for Contemporary Dance Berlin, the Detroit Dance City Festival, as well as in many of venues. She serves as ballet master for the staging of classical ballets like Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake, and Coppélia for colleges as well as private coaching and mentoring for high school ballet dancers. In addition to creating the curriculum for Michigan's only K-12 Dance Education program, she has given professional development workshops for K-12 teachers at Michigan Dance Festival, SHAPE Michigan, Baltimore County Schools, and for the Detroit Public Schools Community District. She is active in Dance Education research and hosted a National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) special topics conference, What Can Data Do for You? in February 2024. She is part of the planning committee for the NDEO Annual Conference which will take place in Detroit in October 2025. She has served on the board of Michigan Dance Council, the state affiliate of NDEO, for the past 11 years and is one of the main coordinators of the annual high school Michigan Youth Dance Festival, a Michigan Dance Council, Oakland University, and University of Michigan collaboration. For the past several years she has been active in advocating for K-12 Dance Education in Michigan as well as throughout the US.

Elizabeth J. Kane, Lonergan, DPT, is a former dancer and licensed physical therapist, including but not limited to an individual who is a Board Certified Specialist in Orthopaedic Physical Therapy. She has specialized knowledge and skill in human anatomy and physiology, movement science, pathology/pathophysiology, pain science, medical and surgical considerations, orthopaedic physical therapy theory and practice, and critical inquiry for evidence-based practice. She is currently the physical therapist for the New Mexico Ballet Company.

Susannah "Sukie" Keita has built her reputation upon developing high-quality dance programs in

Arizona's public schools and is dedicated to a mission of supporting the next generation of artists to share their stories and perspectives. Sukie grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan studying classical ballet with Charthel Arthur and Bob Estner of Robert Joffrey's original company. Expanding her dance palette during sojourns in New York City and Germany, she had the opportunity to meet Katherine Dunham in 2000. She sought teaching certification in Dunham Technique and an MFA at the University Of Arizona's School Of Dance. Sukie Keita has produced and appeared with Orts Theatre of Dance, Thom Lewis Dance, and New Articulations, and performed in work by Leanne Schmidt, Ojeya Cruz Banks, Kimi Eisele, Jenny Showalter, Kevin Godrey-Chevalier, and more. Recruited to lead the Dance Department at Grand Canyon University in 2010, she launched new bachelor degree programs in dance and dance education. She has also served for 10 years on the board of the Arizona Dance Education Organization and currently serves as Pedagogy Committee Chair with the Institute for Dunham Technique Certification. She creates, produces, and consults through www.Sukie.Dance and teaches at Estrella Mountain Community College and Spisak Dance Academy.

Rachel Kellbach is a board-certified Nurse Practitioner with over a decade of clinical experience, having worked as a nurse since 2010. She is a graduate of the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus, where she earned her Nurse Practitioner degree, and she practices in primary care with a strong emphasis on holistic and functional medicine.
Before entering healthcare, Rachel danced competitively and trained professionally, giving her firsthand insight into the physical and mental demands placed on dancers. Now a dance mom, she brings both professional expertise and personal experience to her work with young athletes and performing artists. Through her clinical practice, Rachel has identified significant gaps in preventative healthcare for dancers—particularly in areas such as nutrition, recovery, injury prevention, and long-term wellness. She is passionate about bridging the gap between medicine and the dance world by providing education that empowers dancers, parents, and educators to support sustainable performance and lifelong health.

Brandi Kelley is a full-time dance educator at Classen SAS Middle School, and is also a health educator in the International Baccalaureate Middle Year Program. She holds an M.F.A in Dance from the University of California Irvine, as well as an M.Ed in Secondary Education from the University of Central Oklahoma. She has served as a writer for the OK State Dance Frameworks and was a Subject Matter Expert for the grant supported OK State Department of Education project, Art Tech. She served many years as the Department Chair for Dance in Oklahoma CityPublic Schools, and was named a Top 9 Teacher of the Year for OKCPS in 2024. She has co-presented at both national and local conferences and professional development for spaces including the National Dance Education Organization's National Conference, the NYC Department of Education, the OK State Department of Education Summer Institute, OKCPS Dance PD, and on-site cross-curricular developments. Brandi is a DET Ambassador for the female-owned dance education resource company, Dance Ed Tips. Brandi’s love of improvisation and dance as a means of joy and wellness comes into play as a current ®Embodiology Teacher Trainee, under the mentorship of Dr. S. Ama Wray. She has served

as a Creative Director for RACE Dance Collective and RACE Academy in Oklahoma City, and continues to be a Project Director and choreographer for the collective. Brandi is proud to continue learning from and giving back to the red dirt that raised her.

Paris Kent is the Artistic Director of the eMOTION Dance Company at Bellaire High School in the Houston Independent School District (HISD). A strategic leader in district-wide arts initiatives, Paris serves as the logistical architect and "right hand" for the HISD Dance Montage and Emerging Choreographers Festival. In this capacity, she manages the complexities of hosting the multi-day event, overseeing technical rehearsals, coordinating guest artist workshops, and securing community sponsorships to ensure the festival's sustainability and growth. A native Houstonian and alumna of Carver Magnet High School, Paris's professional journey includes training with the Houston Metropolitan Dance Company and performing in preludes for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Batsheva Dance Company. She has trained with the Dance Theatre of Harlem and Debbie Allen Dance Academy under such luminaries as Debbie Allen and Tessandra Chavez. Paris earned a BFA in Dance from Sam Houston State University and a Master's in Educational Administration. Currently pursuing a Master's in Social Work, she previously directed the Alief Elsik Revelliers and performed with Urban Souls Dance Company. Her unique blend of administrative precision and artistic excellence is central to HISD's mission.

Julie Kerr-Berry is a Professor Emerita of Dance at Minnesota State University, Mankato, USA. There, she directed the Dance Program and later chaired its Department of Theatre & Dance. Julie is Editor Emerita of the Journal of Dance Education. Her scholarly publications focus on the intersections of dance, race, history, and whiteness. She has received awards for her scholarship, leadership, and work relative to social justice and racial equity with the National Dance Education Organization. Her creative research has been featured in American College Dance Association's Gala Concerts. Earlier in her career, she was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study dance in Indonesia. This led to other international dance study and her development of study abroad coursework for her students. Julie holds advanced degrees from Temple University's Department of Dance in Philadelphia, PA.

Katrina Killian is the Director of Children's/Preparatory Divisions at the School of American Ballet where she oversees professional development of ballet teachers participating in the National Visiting Fellows Program. Following early ballet study in Pennsylvania with Marcia Dale Weary, Ms. Killian began her SAB training with the 1977 Summer Course and subsequently enrolled in SAB's Winter Term from 1979 to 1981. George Balanchine invited Ms. Killian to join New York City Ballet in 1981. She rose to the rank of soloist in 1989. In 1997, she joined the School of American Ballet as a guest teacher upon retirement from performing. She was appointed to the faculty in 1998. In 2018, Ms. Killian was named the School's Children's Division Manager overseeing SAB's progressive classical ballet syllabus for children and supervising teaching training programs. She rose to Senior Manager in 2022 and was named the Director of Children's/Preparatory Divisions in September 2024. Ms. Killian currently also serves as Repertory Director for the New York City Ballet's Education Department, staging productions

featuring SAB's Intermediate and Advanced students for NYCB programs which reach over 2,000 public school children each year.

Hetty King - BFA, MFA, MA, CMA, RSDE, TT®, RYT200, NYS PreK-12 Dance - is a native New Yorker. Hetty is a performer, choreographer, dance educator, and scholar. Her work has been presented in NYC and across Canada. As a performer, she danced in the companies of Ralph Lemon and David Dorfman to name a few. Working in the field of dance education since 2000, first as a teaching artist and then as a licensed NYS Dance Educator she has worked in public and private schools primarily with grades PreK-5. A student of the late somatic movement pioneer Nancy Topf she has completed Topf's posthumous manuscript – 'A Guide to a Somatic Movement Practice - The Anatomy of Center' available July 2022 through the University Press of Florida. Hetty is a EdD student in Dance Education at Teachers College.

Akemi Kinukawa, Senior Teaching Artist: Akemi began working for Dancing Classrooms in 2011 and by the end of the year was nominated "Rookie of the Year." She is originally from Japan where she didn't have any chance to explore the art of social dancing. It was when she was welcomed into the Lindy Hop dance community in Washington, D.C. that her life changed dramatically. For this reason, she is passionate about sharing social dancing with children. She also works as a Lindy Hop choreographer and instructor. Her work, from dance pieces to dance theater, champions Lindy Hop's spirit by educating on its history and cultural context, furthering the legacy of inclusivity. Highlights of her career include performing at the opening night of Lincoln Center's Midsummer Night Swing in 2017 as well as performing with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis in 2016.

Robert Kleinendorst received his B.A. in Dance from Luther College in 1995. Immediately upon graduation, Robert moved to New York City to pursue a dance career. Robert attended daily classes at the Paul Taylor Dance Company while dancing for Anna Sokolow's Players' Project, Gail Gilbert Dance Ensemble, and Cortez and Co. In 1998, Robert was asked to join Paul Taylor's second company, Taylor 2. Robert was then asked to join Mr. Taylor's main company in 2000 in which he danced until his retirement in 2019. In his 21 years with Paul Taylor, Robert danced 98 roles in 77 of Taylor's dances and originated 28 roles with Mr. Taylor. He also originated roles with choreographers Larry Keigwin, Doug Varone, Lila York, Doug Elkins, Bryan Arias, Pam Tanowitz, Margie Gillis, and Kyle Abraham. In addition to his performing career, Robert taught master classes domestically and abroad as well as teaching at the Taylor School in New York. Robert also took on the responsibilities of assistant rehearsal directing and administrating all of Mr. Taylor's company auditions. Robert received his MFA in Dance from George Mason University in 2021. He spent the following year as the Coordinator of the Dance Department and Director of the Dance Company at Anne Arundel Community College. Robert is currently on faculty as an Assistant Professor of Dance at Towson University. Robert started his love for the arts in music and theatre. He was a vocal major at Luther College with the intent to have a career in musical theatre when he began taking dance classes and immediately fell in love. He finished his vocal major as well as adding a dance major with the intent of pursuing a career in concert dance. Throughout the years Robert's love for music and theatre has never diminished. He was greatly utilized in

character roles during his career with Paul Taylor and acting, imagination, and performance are key elements in his teaching and choreography. Robert has continued his love of music by singing and playing guitar and for a glorious 3 years, he was in a band that performed throughout New York City. Robert was also the company liaison for all live orchestras with Paul Taylor, and he often creates and records his own music for choreography and class. Robert has been married to another former Paul Taylor star, Amy Young (now Amy Kleinendorst) for 14 years and he has two incredible children with her, a daughter named Sadie who is 12 years old, and a son named Axel who is 9.

Ishmael Konney is an interdisciplinary Ghanaian artist hailing from La, a prominent town in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. Ishmael has an undergraduate degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Education, Winneba. He was recruited to the United States, where he earned an M.A. in International Studies from Ohio University, as well as an MFA in Dance with an Interdisciplinary Specialization in Fine Arts from The Ohio State University. Currently, Ishmael holds the position of Assistant Professor of Dance at University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Before moving to the United States, Ishmael honed his craft with the National Dance Company of Ghana at the National Theatre of Ghana. His research interests center on the promotion of Ghanaian cultural values, with a keen focus on exploring the intricate relationship and intersectionality between performance and traditional Ghanaian cultural practices. Currently, his artistic pursuits delve into the fusion of traditional Ghanaian storytelling with contemporary dance forms, aiming to create immersive communal experiences that celebrate Ghanaian heritage and identity. Ishmael has performed at renowned venues including, Sadler's Wells Theatre (London- UK), Lincoln Theatre (Columbus, OH) National Theatre of Ghana, National Conference Center, and Alliance Français (Accra- Ghana).

Karenne Koo - I am a dance artist committed to developing and practicing multi-disciplinary approaches to encourage and stimulate the art of inclusive dance as an instrument for building community. In 2017, I co-founded Dancesequences Inc., a Tucson-based nonprofit dance organization with the mission to advance inclusion through movement and dance. I was Co-Founder of Evolve Dance Inc. in New York and served as Executive Director from 2006 to 2017. I serve on the Board of Directors of Mettler Studios, Inc. and is a member of the International Association for Creative Dance. Utilizing Mettler-based creative dance as a foundational resource, I conducted creative dance residencies in New York, San Francisco, Vietnam, Indonesia and Peru for communities that are vulnerable with little or no access to dance programming, including LGBTQ support networks, children and women rescued from trafficking/abuse/homelessness and children and adults with diverse abilities. In Tucson, I completed a 3-year dance residency at Arts for All, Inc., a nonprofit arts organization that provides art education for adults and children with diverse abilities and co-directed the Arts for All Adult Dance Ensemble, a performing group of dancers with diverse abilities that regularly presented original works at multiple venues. I facilitate creative group dance workshops/residencies with Arizona TASH, Integrative Touch for Kids, Mettler Studios, Inc., Pio Decimo Center, Satori School, Sister Jose Women's Center, TKD Wellness, ZUZI! Dance Company, several memory care/assisted living

senior retirement residences and the unique Dancesequences Equinimity Project of dancing with horses. I continue to work towards expanding the potential of creative dance as an inclusive, communal experience by developing collaborative partnerships with multiple community organizations, both national and international. (dancesequences.org; karennekoo.net)

Sanja (Sanya) Korman is an avid arts advocate, a nationally recognized dance teacher, and a strong supporter of developing 21st-century skills through arts education. Currently employed by Houston ISD as a Fine Arts Dance coordinator, Sanya provides PK-12 curriculum, instruction resources, professional development, leadership, mentoring, arts organization partnership, and support to dance teachers. Sanya believes everyone has talents that require platforms to showcase them. Therefore, Sanya creates platforms for students' performances and their artistic expression. Through Houston ISD Dance Education and carefully designed dance programs, students are trained to dance, choreograph, and perform and educated to become self-motivated, competent, lifelong learners equipped for the challenges of a contemporary global society, which is the ultimate goal. Sanya earned a BS in Kinesiology from the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina, and a master's in education, curriculum & instruction from Concordia University Texas. Sanya was recognized twice as a National Dance Educator by the National Dance Association and Dance Magazine in 2008, as well as various state and regional Dance Teacher of the Year awards. Recently, Sanya was nominated for an Outstanding Leadership Award in K-12 by the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO). Sanya is an active member of various professional organizations, serving in any capacity as requested: a presenter, officer, advocate, or attendee.

Petra Kuppers (she/her) is a community performance artist, a disability culture activist, and a wheelchair dancer. She uses social somatics, performance, and speculative writing to engage audiences toward more socially just and enjoyable futures. She has been engaged in community dance and disability culture production since the late 80s and continues to lead workshops internationally. Currently, she runs weekly online disability culture movement classes, Starship Somatics, through Movement Research. When her chronic pain does not allow outer movement, Kuppers writes. Her third performance poetry collection, Gut Botany (Wayne State University Press, 2020), was named one of the top ten US poetry books of 2020 by the New York Public Library and won the 2022 Creative Book Award by the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment. Kuppers also writes speculative fiction and academic books (latest, Eco Soma: Joy and Pain in Speculative Performance Encounters (University of Minnesota Press, 2022, open access). Kuppers was a 2021 Dance Research Fellow at the New York Public Library's dance division, where she created the ongoing Crip/Mad Archive Dances, and she is a 2022 Dance/USA Fellow. She is Artistic Director of The Olimpias, an international disability culture collective, and co-creates Turtle Disco, a somatic writing studio, with her wife, poet and dancer Stephanie Heit, from their home on Three Fires Confederacy Territory, colonially known as Ypsilanti, Michigan. Kuppers is the Anita Gonzalez Collegiate Professor of Performance Studies and Disability Culture at the University of Michigan, and an adviser on the MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts at Goddard College. www.petrakuppers.com

L

Erin Lally is the Director of DEL at 92Y. For over fifteen years, Erin has taught dance in a variety of settings, sharing her love of dance with children. At Luna Dance Institute she was the Family Services Manager, specializing in family dance classes, working with families in the reunification process. Erin was the former Education Director of RIOULT and founding member and Dance Specialist at Bronx Arts in the South Bronx, where she created the dance curriculum and taught grades K-5. Erin was a teaching artist for New York City Center, American Ballet Theatre, Ballet Hispanico, and American Repertory Ballet Company. She received the 2021 Outstanding Leadership Award from NYSDEA. At 92Y, she teaches weekly dance classes in the Nursery School and family dance in the Parenting Center.

ShanDien Sonwai LaRance is a world-renowned Native American hoop dancer, performing artist, instructor, actor, model, and public speaker. With over 25 years of dance experience, she is proudly Hopi, Tewa, Navajo, and Assiniboine, born and raised in Flagstaff, Arizona, to artists Marian Denipah-LaRance and Steve Wikivia LaRance. Surrounded by Native jewelry, sculpture, painting, ceremony, and community, she was immersed in Indigenous art and culture from birth. ShanDien began her hoop dance journey at eight years old under the guidance of her older brother, the late Nakotah LaRance, a nine-time World Champion and one of the most influential hoop dancers in history. Performing alongside Nakotah and her younger brother Cree LaRance, she spent her childhood sharing their family's artistic legacy at festivals, conferences, and cultural gatherings throughout the Southwest. After graduating high school, ShanDien followed in Nakotah's footsteps and ran away to the circus, joining Cirque du Soleil's Big Top show TOTEM as a lead character and cultural performer. Over the next nine years, she completed more than 5,000 performances in over 25 countries, mastering the art of hoop dance and becoming an international cultural ambassador for the Native American and First Peoples communities and nations. Her career has included performances at some of the world's most prestigious venues and celebrations. She was a featured hoop dancer at the White House Inaugural Native American Heritage Celebration, hosted by Dr. Jill Biden, and she served as a cultural performer at the World Expo 2024 in Osaka, Japan, representing the United States at the U.S. Pavilion. ShanDien has been recognized as a Dance/USA Fellow, performed with the Brooklyn Ballet's Nutcracker, contributed her voice as the Eagle Dancer for Netflix's Spirit Rangers, and headlined the SWAIA Santa Fe Indian Market Haute Couture Fashion Show. Her artistry has been showcased at the Miccosukee Arts & Crafts Festival, featured in Lonely Planet's Best of Travel: New Mexico Local's Guide, highlighted in the statewide New Mexico True tourism campaign, and brought to the stage as a lead performer in Cirque du Yaateeh. She also serves as the creative director of the Mystic Echoes Indigenous Dinner Show in Santa Fe. The passing of her brother Nakotah in 2020 profoundly reshaped her purpose. ShanDien returned home with a deeper commitment to honoring his legacy and upholding their family's teachings while uplifting Indigenous communities. She stepped into the role of master instructor, teaching more than 100 Indigenous youth and witnessing many of them grow into champion dancers and cultural performers. Through her mentorship, she

watched young Indigenous individuals transform into confident, grounded, and culturally proud members of their communities. Today, ShanDien's work is rooted in a powerful mission: to reconnect Native American and First Peoples—especially adults—to movement, wellness, cultural identity, and healing through the practice and philosophy of the hoop dance. Her teachings emphasize movement as medicine, fitness grounded in culture, healing through storytelling and motion, and identity shaped through the circle of life. Guided by tradition and her family's enduring legacy, ShanDien Sonwai LaRance continues to stand as one of the foremost Indigenous performers of her generation, committed to strengthening her community through culture, movement, and the transformative power of the hoop.

Erin Lane holds a BFA in Dance from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and an MFA in Dance from University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee Peck School of the Arts. She's trained with numerous world-renowned teachers from a wide variety of classical and contemporary backgrounds including Merce Cunningham Dance Studio and Salzburg Academy of Experimental Dance. Erin's professional performing credits include nearly two decades of work with several freelance choreographers and dance companies: SYREN Modern Dance, Beth Soll and Dancers, ess/Danceworks, Common Thread Contemporary Ballet, and Leverage Dance Theater. Her choreography has been presented in the Prism Theatre Company's HOPE Festival of New Works, and in consecutive annual site-specific multidisciplinary artistic collaborations with Audubon Riverlands. Additionally, Erin has twenty-two years of teaching experience in a variety of sectors including K-12 public/private, dance studios, higher education. Currently, Erin is the Associate Professor of Dance and Dance Program Chair at Principia College where she teaches all dance courses and directs the annual Dance Production. She holds additional certifications in Progressing Ballet Technique, Vaganova Method teacher training, Brain-Compatible Dance Education, and is a 200HR RYT. She continues to choreograph, perform, collaborate, and guest teach in IL and MO.

Lynne Larson received a BFA in Dance from Western Michigan University and a MFA in Dance from University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. She danced professionally with Martita Goshen's Earthworks, Repertory Dance Theatre, SBDance and Koester & Dancers. In 2007, she was named Education Director for Repertory Dance Theatre, and in 2014, Artistic Associate. In 2024, Lynne was named Associate Artistic/Executive Director along with colleague Nicholas Cendese. She is co-director of Dance West, an annual summer dance intensive in Salt Lake City, UT held in collaboration with the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company and University of Utah School of Dance. Lynne is an accomplished teacher of students K-professional in creative movement and modern dance. Lynne is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Utah in the School of Dance and on the faculty of the MAT-FA program in the College of Fine Arts. In 2019, she was named Dance Educator of the Year by UDEO for the Professional/Private Sector.

Silva Laukkanen is a community dance artist, educator, and advocate for inclusive dance education. Inspired by early teaching at a rehabilitation center in Finland, she shifted her focus to community-based practice—working across settings from senior centers to schools and professional companies—expanding perceptions of who can dance and where dance

happens. She is Director of Integrated Dance at Art Spark Texas, where she leads accessible dance programs in schools and community settings, including intensives, performance projects, and monthly classes, while developing leadership pathways for artists with disabilities. Silva founded and hosts the DanceCast Podcast (2016), featuring conversations with non-traditional dance artists and global leaders in integrated dance, and she co-authored Breadth of Bodies: Discussing Disability in Dance (2021), later translated into Korean (2022). Her ongoing research includes Refocusing Dance Education (launched 2021) and earlier work on gaps in pre-professional training for students with disabilities. In 2020, she co-founded Tractus Art to develop accessible arts projects and media highlighting artists with disabilities. Silva holds a BFA from North Karelia College and a postgraduate degree from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, is a certified DanceAbility International teacher (since 2003), is currently pursuing an MA at London Contemporary Dance School, and serves as Board President of Kaaos Company.

Cara Lavallee - A graduate of William Smith College (BA, Dance) and Temple University (EdM, Dance), Cara believes the arts are a vehicle for self-discovery as well as a window into diverse perspectives and experiences. She works to build a performing arts program that values individuality and community. Cara was the Dance Director at The Episcopal Academy in Newtown Square, PA for eight years. Currently, she teaches dance at The Galloway School in Atlanta, GA. At Galloway, Cara aims to highlight the many talented dancers, with a variety of dance backgrounds, by fostering an environment of inclusion and belonging, regardless of where a student is on their dance journey.An elected representative from the Southeast region, Cara serves on the Board of Directors for the National Dance Education Organization (ndeo.org). Cara is also passionate about working with her local state affiliate, Dance Educators of Georgia Society (degasteachers.org). As the Director of Communications, Cara boosts the visibility of the organization by maintaining the website, streamlining branding, creating and distributing newsletters and promoting the events and initiatives of the DEGAS team.

Brian Lawson is a dance performer and educator who began dancing in Toronto, Canada. He earned his B.F.A. in dance at SUNY Purchase and performed with Douglas Dunn and Dancers and the Mark Morris Dance Group while studying. He graduated summa cum laude in 2010 and went on to work with Pam Tanowitz Dance and Dance Heginbotham before joining the Mark Morris Dance Group from 2011-18. He left MMDG to earn his M.F.A. from the University of Washington, where he graduated in 2020. He served on the faculty of Cornish College of the Arts and has given masterclasses at Purchase College, New York University Tisch School of the Arts, and the American Dance Festival, among others. Lawson is currently an assistant professor at Skidmore College. He continues to perform with Pam Tanowitz Dance and MMDG and has shown his own choreographic works across the US.

Betsy Maloney Leaf, PhD, MFA, is an Assistant Professor in the Arts in Education program at the University of Minnesota where she teaches in the interarts licensure (dance, theatre, visual art) and PhD program. Her research utilizes arts-based and narrative methodologies to examine the nexus of arts education, teacher training, and culturally relevant pedagogy. Maloney Leaf's scholarship has been published

in the Journal of Dance Education, Research in Dance Education, Youth Theatre Journal, Studies in Art Education, Arts Education Policy Review, Climate Literacy Journal, and Review of Research in Education. Her most recent project includes a three-year grant funded project to provide targeted mentorship support to early career K-12 dance and theatre teachers in Minnesota. Maloney Leaf holds a MN K-12 dance and theatre teaching license. She serves as chair of the NDEO dance teacher training SIG.

Andrea Lee's research centers African ontology and Critical Dance Pedagogy to examine arts equity and transformative learning. Her scholarly contribution, "African Ontology to Inform Transformational Learning," appears in Equity-Driven, High Achievement: Assessment of Student Learning and Development. As a Fulbright Scholar, she developed "Blow the Whistle! The Morphogenesis of South Africa's Pantsula Youth Movement," an interdisciplinary eLearning model. Her distinguished arts career spans three decades as a professional dancer and choreographer. Trained in Katherine Dunham Technique and modern-jazz, she served as a principal dancer with Dimensions Dance Theater, Nuba Dance Theater, and the Haitian folkloric company Petit La Croix. She also co-founded Jikelele South African Dance Company. Her choreographic works, including the musical, "Araminta! Harriet Tubman Lives" have been presented by major festivals in the USA and Ghana. Lee is Founder and CEO of Cultural Links Global Education Institute, where she advances equity in study abroad and safeguards Indigenous African artistic and cultural knowledge traditions through global education initiatives. Dr. Lee holds an Ed.D. in Educational Administration from San Diego State University, an MA in Secondary Education, Single Subject Teaching Credential in Physical Education and Dance, and a BA in Dance Performance and Choreography from San Francisco State University.

Susannah LeMarquand (MFA, MA) is an Associate Professor of Dance, and Director of the Dance Program, at the University of Tampa. She has performed and choreographed professionally for Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines, Busch Gardens Tampa, Norwegian Cruise Lines, Silver Seas Cruise Lines, Zoo Tampa, and multiple Florida-based production companies. She has studied with artists such as Ann Reinking, Bill Evans, and Anne Green Gilbert. Susannah earned her MA in Dance Education from New York University and her MFA in Choreography from Jacksonville University. Susannah was honored to help create University of Tampa's dance major curriculum, which is based on brain- compatible dance education. In 2021, she earned her certification in the Bill Evans Technique. Along with her teaching load at UT, she also serves as a resident choreographer at Busch Gardens Tampa Bay and is the Director of The University of Tampa's Student Dance Happenings, mentoring students in their own choreographic processes.

Kelly Ferris Lester (EdD, MFA, BFA, RSMT, RYT) is Vice Provost for Faculty Excellence at the University of Central Florida. She earned her BFA in theatre and dance from the University of Memphis, her MFA in choreography and performance from The College at Brockport (SUNY), and her Ed.D in higher education administration at the University of Southern Mississippi. Lester was an active member of the NDEO Board of Directors from 2011-2024 in multiple roles, including Director of Student Chapter, Policy Board Director, and Treasurer. During her presidency (2021-2022), Lester focused on the JDEI (Justice, Diversity, Equity,

and Inclusion) project and strategic planning for the organization. Lester is an ACUE credentialed educator and featured throughout the “Effective Teaching Practices” modules as part of ACUE's program. Lester is a co-founder of Hub Dance Collective for which she regularly performs and shares choreography. Her choreography has been featured at many national festivals including ACDA Galas (20116, 2011), and a tour of The Body Politic with collaborator and dancer Elizabeth Lentz-Hill (2016-2018). Lester's scholarly publications include "Somatics: A Buzz Word Defined" in JoDE, and "Environments for Self-Learning" in Moving Consciously: Somatic Transformations Through Dance, Yoga, and Touch (ed. Sondra Fraleigh).

Jessie Levey (she/her) is a contemporary post-modern dancer and has been teaching for more than thirty years. In addition to making her own work, she has performed with many choreographers throughout the New York Metropolitan area, Wisconsin, Lebanon, and the Hudson Valley. Jessie considers her life as both an educator and artist to be deeply intertwined.As the founder and director of Barefoot Dance Center, Jessie continues to teach through Barefoot's three lenses (creativity, somatics, and identity), which she developed over many years in the field. She holds an MFA in Dance from The Peck School of the Arts at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, is a Registered Somatic Dance Educator, and certified as both a childbirth educator and yoga instructor. As a member of National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), she attends annual conferences, co-chairs Dance 2050, and teaches on OPDI course. Her published articles may be found in NDEO's journal, Dance Education in Practice. Jessie is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Vassar College Dance Department and leads professional development workshops to classroom teachers and dance educators nationally and internationally.Jessie is honored to have received the National Dance Education Organization’s 2023 Award for Outstanding Leadership (in the private sector) and New York State Dance Education Association’s 2021 Award for Outstanding Dance Educator. She was also the recipient of the 2015-17 Jubilation Foundation Fellowship for excellence in teaching.

Stephanie Liapis is a Southern California–based artist, educator, and scholar whose work explores interaction and visibility through dance and video works, experimental film, and interactive experiences. Her recent project, Reframe, was exhibited in London and Los Angeles. Stephanie performed extensively in New York City with Doug Varone and Dancers, Susan Marshall & Company and Nicholas Leichter among others. As a scholar, she presents research in embodied writing with Jennifer Salk, restages the professional works of Doug Varone, and collaborates with artists across disciplines. She holds a B.F.A. from NYU Tisch School of the Arts and an M.F.A. from the University of Washington and currently teaches at Chapman University.

Allegra Lillard is the creator and author of Dance for Joy: A Creative Movement Curriculum for Ages 3–5 Years. She began her dance training in her home state of Texas and attended Walnut Hill School for the Arts in Massachusetts. Allegra continued her studies in New York City at The School of American Ballet and American Ballet Theatre summer programs, and in Canada at the Banff Centre. Her dance career has taken her throughout the United States, Canada, and Asia. Professionally, she performed soloist and principal roles with

Atlanta Ballet, Ballet British Columbia, Ballet Hawaii, Hawaii Ballet Theatre, and Oregon Ballet Theatre. From 1997–2004, Allegra worked with NDI New Mexico as Residency Director, Associate Artistic Director, and Master Teacher. She was the Founding Director of Dance for Joy, a dance school offering creative movement and ballet for all levels, from 2004–2011. In 2011, she returned to NDI New Mexico as Artistic Director of The Dance Barns, a position she held until 2018. Allegra currently serves as Director of Early Childhood Curriculum at NDI New Mexico and continues to teach children and lead teacher-training workshops nationally and internationally. For more information, visit www.learndanceforjoy.com.

Charlotte Lobben is a fourth-year undergraduate student at Colorado State University, where she is pursuing a multidisciplinary academic path with majors in English, Education, and Dance. Her studies reflect her deep commitment to both the arts and inclusive education, as she seeks to bridge the gap between creative expression and pedagogical practice. Charlotte is especially passionate about advocating for neurodiverse students, working to ensure that children with diverse learning and developmental needs are not only accommodated but celebrated, both within the classroom and in broader community contexts. Her advocacy is rooted in a belief that every student deserves access to meaningful, affirming educational experiences that honor their unique strengths and challenges.
In all aspects of her work, Charlotte is driven by a philosophy of inclusivity, empathy, and empowerment. She strives to cultivate spaces, whether academic, artistic, or social, where all individuals feel valued, respected, and safe to grow. Her approach emphasizes the importance of emotional and psychological safety as foundational to both learning and self-expression. She sees the arts, particularly dance, as powerful tools for fostering connection, self-awareness, and confidence, especially for students who may struggle with traditional forms of communication or engagement. Outside of her university coursework, Charlotte brings her passion for inclusive arts education into the community. She teaches evening dance classes at a local studio in Fort Collins, where she works with students of varying ages and abilities. This role not only enriches her experience as an educator but also reinforces her commitment to accessibility in the arts. Teaching in this setting allows her to apply inclusive practices in real-time, designing classes that are adaptable, welcoming, and attuned to individual learning needs. She finds great joy and fulfillment in this work, and it continually informs her academic pursuits and future career goals.
Through her studies and community involvement, She is developing an authentic and forward-thinking approach to education, one that strives to blend creativity, compassion, and equity. She hopes to continue this work by contributing to conversations about inclusive pedagogy and by designing educational programs that use dance and movement as tools for connection, learning, and healing.

Carol Lonnie - Ms. Lonnie holds an MA from NYU in Dance and Dance Education and a BFA from Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts in Dance. She is the former dance director and teacher at Philippa Schuyler Middle School for the Gifted and Talented (I.S. 383), where she also served for 34 years as Performing Arts Coordinator. She is a facilitator for the Dance Advisory Committee and the Connected Arts Network (formerly Arts Monday and ALC), leading workshops on formative

assessment, unit planning, and rubric development. She has written and developed dance curriculum for the 92nd Street Y, the NYC Department of Education's Dance Book of Units, and the Tracing Footsteps Curriculum, and served on the DOE Delta Blueprint committee developing professional development for dance educators. Ms. Lonnie has been a mentor teacher for NYU and Hunter College and currently teaches ballet, modern, and jazz to adults at Fit4Dance in Brooklyn. She previously taught at the Charles Moore Dance Center for Ethnic Studies and served as Artistic Director of the Charles Moore Youth Ensemble. A principal dancer and dance captain with the Charles Moore Dance Theater for 38 years, she has performed at DanceAfrica, in Italy, and with numerous companies and ensembles. She is a board member of Mixed Bag & Co. and former co-artistic director of Dreams Dance Ensemble.

Julie Holt Lucia holds an MSc in Adolescent Health and is a youth mental health coach, certified through the Youth Coaching Institute. This fall she begins her doctoral studies, researching how adolescent dancers perceive thriving in pre-professional contexts. A 20-year dance educator and former dance studio owner, Julie now blends her experience, scholarship, and well-being expertise to help dance educators recognize adolescence as a time not of inevitable crisis, but of incredible opportunity. Her mission is to support dancers' holistic well-being by coaching them in group and individual settings, elevating their perspectives, and teaching educators about adolescent development.

Stormi Luney (she/her) is in her seventh year of teaching in public education at Capitol Hill High School in Oklahoma City. Within her teaching career at her alma mater, she served as the Visual and Performing Arts Chair and the Sites Coordinator for the Academy of Arts (2021-2025). She was honored as the youngest Capitol Hill High School alumnus to be inducted into the Capitol Hill High School Hall of Fame in the Fall of 2023. Stormi Luney trained with Perpetual Motion from the Fall of 2019 until the Fall of 2024 as a dancer, aerialist, and Coordinator of the Oklahoma Contemporary Dance Festival (2023, 2024), as well as served as the public school liaison. She graduated with her B.A. in Dance Education from the University of Central Oklahoma in the Spring of 2019. During her time at UCO, she received the Outstanding PK-12 Undergraduate Education Major Award and the Dean's Recognition Award in Dance. A former member of UCO's touring dance company, Kaleidoscope, she has worked with artists such as DIAVOLO, Jeremy Duvall, Mike Esperanza, Noa Shiloh, and many more. Stormi has participated in professional development conferences, including the National Dance Education Organization Conference, the Oklahoma Summer Arts Academy, and the National Conference of Undergraduate Research, as a co-presenter and performer. The Oklahoma State Department of Education selected her to serve on a team of writers to create the frameworks for the Oklahoma State Dance Standards. Stormi is a traditionally certified dance educator and is serving in her second year on the Oklahoma Arts Institute advisory panel for dance, and the programming and volunteer committees for OKC's annual Calderon Dance Festival.

Kathy Luo is a multifaceted dance artist and educator based in California. She is an Assistant Professor of Dance at California State University, Fresno. Kathy holds an M.F.A. in Dance along with the Dance Teaching Artist Certificate from Arizona State University. Her professional skills

include Modern/Contemporary Dance Techniques, Ballet, Asian Diaspora Dance studies, and Yoga/Pilates training. Kathy's academic research centers on interdisciplinary collaboration between dance and theater from the creative aspects of immersive theater and site-specific dance. Kathy is interested in evoking a wide range of audience participation to honor our diverse social identities that provoke critical and thoughtful discourse and bring different disciplines together to initiate creative ownership. As a dancer, Kathy has engaged in different dance festivals and conferences in the field. She has presented works at the American College Dance Association Conference (ACDA), National Dance Education Organization Conference (NDEO), Las Vegas Dance in the Desert Festival, L.A. Feedback Film Festival, Utah Dance Film Festival, Arizona Dance Festival, and Southeast Theatre Conference (SETC). Kathy is the selected performing artist for 2023 Mark DeGarmo Dancer's Transcultural and Trans-disciplinary Salon Performance in New York City.

Neo Lynch possesses over 22 years of experience in teaching students from K-12 learners engaging in recreational dance to those competing at national levels, as well as guiding pre-professional and seasoned professional dancers throughout the United States. As a choreographer, Neo has earned regional and national acclaim, securing Choreography Excellence Awards in hip-hop, jazz, lyrical, and contemporary dance. Dedicated to facilitating and curating inclusive dance environments through education, Neo is actively involved with the Dance Studies Association (DSA), the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), and the Youth Protection in Dance (YPAD) through her memberships. She has established the Black Dance Teachers Association (BDTA) where she leads as the founder and director and is the founding chapter sponsor for The Abby Warren Memorial Chapter of the National Honor Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA), ensuring recognition for dancers who excel academically and artistically. Holding a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Virginia Commonwealth University, Neo is a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Choreography candidate at Jacksonville University. Her academic research explores the intersectionality of hermeneutics, whiteness studies, and Color-Blind and Color-Consciousness ideologies as they pertain to dance education and the dissemination of dance history and culture.

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Dr. Deepa Mahadevan is the founder, artistic director and resident choreographer of Tiruchitrambalam school of dance (Estd. 2004-present) where she teaches Bharatanatyam dance and critical dance theory.
Dr. Mahadevan's research traces the history of rupture, loss and reconstruction of Bharatanatyam dance aesthetics and its transmission in the wake of nationalism, globalization and neoliberalism from early twentieth century to present times. She especially examines the role of caste, class, sexuality, gender and religion in the practice and transmission of dance. Her current works engage in working with both western academia and practice to include and synthesize aspects of Indian dance and theatre. She appeals with rhythm and emotion in performance to transcend socio-cultural barriers.

Nimisha Mahiyaria is an international classical Indian and modern dancer, educator & author

based in New York City. She is currently the incoming doctoral fellow of Dance Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. She has previously worked as an instructional dance educator at Science Skills High School, Brooklyn NY. Mahiyaria has also worked as a Digital Communications Associate for Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University. As a scholar, she has co-authored Chapter 8: The Role of Yoga In Orthopaedic Disorders in Fundamentals of AYUSH: An Introductory Course for Health Professionals alongside Dr. Ahuja, Specialized Orthopaedic Surgeon at AIIMS hospital India. In 2021, Mahiyaria was selected to present her research on the impact of dance improvisation on trauma healing at New York State Dance Education Association (NYSDEA) Conference. In addition to her passion for teaching dance Mahiyaria has also taught yoga for the last decade, a movement practice native to her country. She is the founder of Hum Yoga, a non-profit organization that teaches the benefits of yoga and meditation to all, especially the disadvantaged populations of our communities. In addition to being a teacher and author, Mahiyaria has been working as a professional freelance dancer for the last 13 years, performing at renowned international venues such as Radio City Music Hall, Lincoln Center, Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium to name a few. Her work has been featured in Rolling Stone Magazine, The New York Times, Dance Magazine, NJArts, The Stewardship Report, Broadway World and broadcasted live on national television in all CommonWealth countries in the world.She is the recipient of the O1 Visa: Alien of Extraordinary Ability and is empaneled in the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India as an outstanding modern dancer. She has been awarded the Doctoral Fellowship at Teachers College along with the Arnhold Ed.D Fellowship. She previously received the Arnhold Scholarship at New York University. Mahiyaria holds a masters degree in Dance Education from Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development at New York University along with a B.F.A in Dance and a B.A. in Public Relations from Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University.

Maia Mahosky is a graduate of Goucher College and recipient of the Brooke Pierce Phi Beta Kappa Award for outstanding research in the arts. Maia formerly interned with LehrerDance and ClancyWorks Dance Company, and taught dance in a studio setting from 2015-2025. Maia's 2018 site-specific multi-disciplinary performance installation, "The Spaces Project," received a mini-grant from The Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, as well as funding and in-kind support from dozens of small businesses, community organizations, and individual donors. Maia has since choreographed, performed, and directed for a variety of rural community organizations and events. She currently produces and hosts The Casual Dance Teacher's Podcast.

Betsy Maloney Leaf, PhD, MFA, is Senior Lecturer in the Arts in Education program at the University of Minnesota, where she teaches both undergraduate and graduate students. Maloney Leaf's research examines the intersection between dance education, culturally relevant pedagogy, and educational policy. Her work has been published in Journal of Curriculum & Pedagogy, Youth Theatre Journal, Journal of Dance Education, Review of Research in Education, Research in Dance Education, and Arts Education Policy Review. Prior to the U of M, Maloney Leaf taught dance for eleven years in K-12 schools; she holds a

Minnesota K-12 Dance & Theatre teaching license.

Laura Malpass is a teaching artist, dancer, and choreographer, interested in the ways dance can transcend boundaries, empower individuals, and transform communities. After obtaining a BA in Psychology with minors in Dance and French from Hope College, Laura performed with Moving Arts Dance, Coco et Compagnie, and other freelance projects around the SF Bay Area. Laura completed their MFA in Dance at CU Boulder, with a secondary emphasis in Somatics and a Graduate Certificate in Women and Gender Studies. Her choreographic work is rooted in story and identity to unpack how our physical bodies hold the memory of our emotional, relational, and experiential lives; their dance film shorts have been featured at Sans Souci Festival of Dance Cinema, ACDA, and CODEO. Teaching is Laura's passion; she is certified in ABT® National Training Curriculum (Primary through Level 7) and was named a Teaching Fellow in 2015. Laura's embodied pedagogy practices are continually transforming and expanding; they explore how somatics can be used as a feminist pedagogical tool to restructure classroom power dynamics, applications of the Ungrading Movement in academia as a practice of equity, and inviting students to partner in co-creating learning spaces with curiosity, compassion, and care.

Sumana Sen Mandala is a Bharata-Nrityam artist. She teaches in studio settings as well as higher education. Her research is a continual re-examining of the meaning of tradition in Indian dance and its value in her and her students' contemporary contexts in the US. She developed the Collaborative Action Dance Project to make Indian dance accessible to any mover through movement cultivated by individual lived experiences. In her current projects, Sumana is exploring the physicality of expressive dance (nritya) in Bharata-Nrityam and is working in the collaboration "Prakriti Surging" a multi-disciplinary project that centers intergenerational female responses to tradition, body, narratives and contemporary voice. Sumana holds an MFA in Dance and is an ASU Gammage Teaching Artist, trained facilitator in the Critical Response Process and racial justice facilitation, and Director of Dansense-Nrtyabodha. (https://www.dansense.org/sumana.html)

Cristina Marte is an Assistant Professor of Professional Practice at the Mason Gross School of the Arts Dance Department, Rutgers University, where she is faculty for the Ed.M. Program in Dance Education and director of the Rutgers Community Arts Summer Conservatory. Her career has encompassed roles as an educator, choreographer, administrator, advocate and most importantly a mother. Cristina is a member of the Arts Ed NJ Steering Committee, Dance New Jersey, and Latinx Dance Educators Alliance. She has developed and implemented dance curriculums for all grades during her time as a New Jersey K12 dance educator. Cristina received her B.F.A. in Dance from Montclair State University and her M.A. in Dance Education from New York University's Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development.

Johari Mayfield is a New York City-based teaching artist, choreographer, and curriculum designer working at the intersection of movement, storytelling, and education. She is the creator of Mrs. Red Fox, a trickster-inspired pedagogical framework rooted in African American folktale traditions that uses movement, curiosity, and co-creation to support

inclusive learning across differences in age, culture, and access. Her work centers on embodied learning as a tool for connection and shared understanding, particularly in classrooms that include neurodivergent students and students with varied mobility. She approaches teaching as a collaborative design practice, emphasizing multiple entry points, visual supports, and movement-based communication. She has traveled to Uganda twice to teach, learn, and collaborate in school and community settings. These experiences reshaped her understanding of teaching—not as delivering content, but as designing learning with others under real conditions. Working across differences in language, infrastructure, and resources clarified that creativity does not disappear under constraint; it sharpens. In these contexts, movement became a shared language when verbal instruction, technology, or systems were limited. Her work in Uganda has been grounded in supporting community-identified resources, including a lunch program, latrine, library, farm, and poultry project. She is currently focused on connecting classrooms through movement globally.

Rachel McCaulsky (EdD) is the Director of Ailey Arts In Education and Community Programs with the Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, where she spearheads the expansion and enhancement of Ailey's nationwide educational initiatives. Dr. McCaulsky has eleven years of experience with the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), serving in various capacities, including Brooklyn South Borough Arts Director, assistant principal, arts coordinator, and teacher. She has supported principals and superintendents in implementing arts programs, overseen curriculum development for diverse and multilingual learners, and led initiatives integrating dance with academic subjects. Her innovative units have been featured in the NYC Department of Education's Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Dance. Dr. McCaulsky's distinguished dance career includes performances with Ailey II, Complexions Contemporary Ballet, and Ballet Hispanico.

Amanda McCorkle, MFA, RSDE, is an award-winning choreographer, performer and teacher from Austin, Texas. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Dance from Texas State University, and a Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance from Texas Woman's University. She is also a Registered Somatic Dance Educator with a specialty in embodied anatomy. Amanda has performed the works of talented choreographers such as: Bebe Miller, Erick Hawkins, Maureen Freehill, Sarah Gamblin, Andrea Ariel, Sally Jacques, Ellen Bartel, and Rosemary Candelario. Her work has been shown nationally and internationally at locations such as the 92nd Street Y in New York City, England, Scotland, France, Mexico, Trinidad, India, Sweden, Italy, and Brazil, the Austin Fringe Festival, the American College Dance Association, Oklahoma, Ohio, Colorado, and many more. She is currently an Associate Professor of Practice in the Dance Division at Texas State University and is the Head of the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Studies program. Currently, Amanda's research interests are centered around teaching movement integration from a somatic perspective. She is committed to celebrating the value and beauty of every person, and to facilitating movers in their experiential journey through the body.

Rebecca McGregor has a Secondary License in Dance, a BS in Exercise Science, and a Masters in Education. In 2003, she developed the dance program at Lyndon Institute and founded the annual Vermont State Dance Festival. She helps

the VT Agency of Education develop and rewrite VT dance standards and licensing requirements, assessment tools in dance education, and advocate for arts education. Rebecca is also Fine/Performing Arts Chair and the Mentor Program Chair at Lyndon Institute. Rebecca is a member of SHAPE and the NDEO. She was a mentor through the NDEO's pilot mentoring program and now is a member of the NDEO Mentoring Committee. She also has given presentations for Northeastern University's NExT Professional Learning Conversations and been chosen as an adjudicator for the NDEO's National Honor Society for Dance Arts Award. Rebecca has received awards like Johnson State College Rising Star/Young Alumni Award, Youth Impact Award, VAHPERD's Dance Educator of the Year Award, and David Dwyer Lyndon Institute Teacher of the Year Award. In 2020, Rebecca also was awarded a Presidential Award from the National Dance Education Organization for her service to the Mentorship Committee and work creating and pursuing a vision for dance education in our country. In 2021, she was accepted into the Vermont Leadership Institute for the 2021-2022 year and was awarded the NDEO's Outstanding Leadership in K12 Education Award in 2022. Her mission in her work is to create opportunities to honor self and others and build integrity through courageous moments.

Ashlee McKinnon is a dancer by passion, and an educator by calling. She has worked in dance education and nonprofit spaces for over 15 years, primarily in the DC and Maryland area. As a champion for equitable youth and enrichment programming, Ashlee connects her passion for the Arts and education with heartfelt community work and advocacy. Ashlee served as a K-12 Dance Educator in DC and Maryland for 10 years before moving into Arts Administration full time when COVID struck. Recognizing the limited reach from being within the education system, Ashlee pursued arts administration to better measure her impact and mission. After completing the Arts of Administration of Color Cohort program, she joined the staff of Dance Place, Imagination Stage, and Story Tapestries. As Director of Education Development and Partnerships, she has consulted on programming models, youth development, and community partnerships. Additionally, Ashlee has served as a dance teaching artist in the DMV area, a grant reviewer for local and national arts agencies, and as a board member for Maryland Dance Educator Association. Whether in the classroom, studio, stage, or board room, Ashlee is a teacher- providing new perspectives about the possibilities within the world around us through arts education.

Meghan McLyman (MA, MFA) is a professor of dance at Salem State University. The University recognized her passion for teaching with the 2017 Distinguished Teaching Award, and in 2018, she received the Arts Learning Distinguished Teaching and Arts Advocacy Award. She is also a recipient of a 2020 Whiting Fellowship. Meghan, along with Kristen Duffy Young, are the co-directors of Accumulation Dance, and were 2019 Next Steps artists under The Boston Foundation. She holds degrees from Point Park University, American University, and Hollins University, is a Moving For Life Certified Teacher under Martha Eddy, and a Certified Evans Teacher under Bill Evans. She also serves on the board of the Massachusetts Dance Education Organization.

Ryan P. McMullen is a dance artist, educator, and administrator serving as Assistant Professor and Dance Program Director at New Mexico

State University. With over a decade of teaching experience in higher education, his background is deeply rooted in Philadelphia house dance traditions and his performance training with Rennie Harris Puremovement. This foundation informs his somatic research, movement efficiency, and commitment to decolonized, culturally sustaining dance pedagogy. Ryan holds a Master of Fine Arts in Dance from Florida State University and a Bachelor of Arts in Dance from Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania. His expansive teaching and choreographic expertise spans house, hip-hop, modern, jazz, tap, and dance conditioning. Currently a doctoral candidate pursuing an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Administration at NMSU, Ryan bridges creative practice and institutional leadership. He actively engages in university governance as an elected member of the NMSU Faculty Senate and serves as a site committee member for the National Dance Education Organization. Dedicated to advocating for accessible, forward-thinking dance education, Ryan brings a comprehensive perspective on curriculum design, student mentorship, and community engagement to the NDEO Board of Directors.

Elizabeth McPherson is a Professor, Dance Division Director, and MFA Dance coordinator at Montclair State University. She is the author of The Contributions of Martha Hill to American Dance and Dance Education, co-author of Broadway, Balanchine and Beyond: A Memoir, and editor/compiler of The Bennington School of the Dance: A History in Writings and Interviews. Her newest book Milestones in Dance in the USA, an edited collection designed for dance history courses, is a 2023 recipient of NDEO's Ruth Lovell Murray book award. Executive Editor of the journal Dance Education in Practice, she has also written numerous articles and reviews for a variety of publications. Elizabeth received her BFA from Juilliard, an MA from The City College of New York, and a PhD from NYU.

Emily Meisner (she/her) began teaching and choreographing for National Dance Institute (NDI) in 2003 and was named the Director of the NDI Collaborative for Teaching & Learning in 2019. As Director of the Collaborative, Emily oversees NDI's teacher training initiatives; she also leads intensive trainings and professional development workshops. She serves as a consultant to organizations across the country and around the world seeking to learn from the NDI Method™. As a Teaching Artist, Emily has taught in diverse school communities throughout New York City, instructing more than 500 children each week in dance education. In 2004, Emily worked alongside NDI's founder, Jacques d'Amboise, to create the early-childhood music and dance program Arts Encounter, which was instrumental to the development of NDI's unique early childhood curriculum. In 2016, Emily directed NDI's Event of the Year, Words with Wings: The Power of Poetry. Prior to joining NDI, Emily trained intensively and danced professionally with the Boston Ballet. She received her undergraduate degree in English Literature from Columbia University and went on to receive her Master's in Education from Bank Street College. Emily is passionate about working with teachers and is dedicated to empowering them to grow both personally and professionally.

Melissa Melpignano is a dance scholar and practitioner, working as Assistant Professor of Dance at The University of Texas at El Paso. Her research interrogates how dance and choreography can help us tackle and conceptualize conflict across fields and sectors.

She is the Principal Investigator of the NEA-funded project "Somatics and Movement for Healthcare" and the director of "Performing Arts for Healthcare," a collaborative initiative between performing arts and healthcare practitioners in the El Paso, TX region. Her recent staged work Carrying Change, featuring six dancers and six healthcare providers, is a Melpignano NDEO 2026 choreographic essay about the U.S. healthcare system. She is also working on the monograph Unsettling Choreographies: Dancing Livability in Palestine-Israel. Her scholarship appears in The Drama Review, Journal of Dance Education, Dance Research Journal, Contemporary Choreography (3rd ed.), among others. She is the recipient of the 2024 Selma Jeanne Cohen Award in Dance Aesthetics. She obtained her PhD in Culture and Performance from UCLA and serves as VP for Awards of the Dance Studies Association.

Isabella Melsheimer Mierzejewski (any pronouns) is an interdisciplinary dance artist, choreographer, and educator from Santa Maria, California. Isabella weaves auto-ethnography, video art, dance, and theatre to create educational and performance experiences that draw attention to the interconnectivity of life, movement, and art. Isabella received a B.A. in Anthropology with a minor in Dance from Scripps College and an M.A. in Dance Education from New York University, with a focus on Teaching Dance in the Professions: Dances of the African Diaspora.

Gabriela Mendoza is a National Board Certified Teacher, dance educator in Los Angeles, and a life-long advocate for creative and culturally responsive arts education. With over 20 years of service in the Los Angeles Unified School District, her work is grounded in equity, student voice, and community connection. She is trained in Theatre Arts and Dance through California State University, Los Angeles, where she earned both her BA and MA with a focus on modern dance and choreography, and holds a second Master's degree in School Leadership emphasizing equity and social justice from California State University, Dominguez Hills. Her artistic foundation was shaped through theatre productions and bilingual performance, as well as the Creative Dance Center's Summer Dance Institute (2008, 2010), where she deepened her passion for creative dance in education. Gabriela approaches her work as a teaching artist with a commitment to ongoing growth, valuing partnerships and collaboration through her role as a coach and mentor teacher within LAUSD, the Connected Arts Network, Luna SI (2024), and her community of dance colleagues. Eager to share her passion for the arts, she teaches Dance 4000 at California State University, Los Angeles, nurturing creativity and love for dance in future classroom teachers.

Dr. Michal Hershkovitz Michaeli is a researcher and lecturer in dance education. She holds a PhD with honors in Educational Sciences and Psychology (UBB, 2023) and an MA with honors in Visual Literacy. Her research focuses on innovative pedagogies in dance teaching and learning, independent and non-formal learning processes, and the integration of technology in dance education. Since 2019, she has served as Head of the Dance Education Program at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. Since 2023, she has led the MA specialization in Dance Pedagogy, and beginning in 2025, she serves as Head of the Graduate Dance Program. She teaches courses in Pedagogical Leadership, Diversity and Inclusion, and Teaching-Learning-Assessment. Dr. Hershkovitz Michaeli is a member of Israel's National

Professional Committee for Dance at the Ministry of Education, the Israeli Society for Dance Research, and the Repertoire Committee of the School Dance Performances Program (SAL TARBUT). From 2007 to 2020, she served as Head of Dance, Movement, and Physical Education at the Karev Program of the Ministry of Education. Her work has been presented at international conferences in China, Romania, and Israel, and she has delivered invited lectures at Columbia University, Rutgers University, and Hunter College.

Stephanie Milling is the Head of Dance Education at the University of South Carolina. She previously served as Chair, Associate Chair, Director of Undergraduate Studies, and Director of Dance at U of SC and Assistant Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts at Winthrop University. Stephanie is the Advocacy Director of the National Dance Education Organization, past President of the South Carolina Arts Alliance, past Arts Education Council member for Americans for the Arts, and editorial board member for The Journal of Movement Arts Literacy, Dance Education in Practice, and Arts Education Policy Review. Stephanie's writing has appeared in the Journal of Dance Education, Dance Education in Practice, Arts Education Policy Review, and other national and international publications.

Brandy "Unique the Deaf Dancer" Mimms is a Black DeafBlind dancer, choreographer, educator, and founder of the Listen With Your Eyes Dance Troupe. Widely recognized as the first Black DeafBlind professional dancer in the United States, her work challenges traditional ideas of access, consent, and embodiment in dance education. Brandy holds an MFA in Dance from Jacksonville University, where her thesis, Artistic Process Inside DeafBlind Choreographic Practice, explored how non-visual and non-auditory methods can lead choreographic process and pedagogy. She also earned a BFA in Dance from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Her performance and choreographic work have been featured at the Bay Area International Deaf Dance Festival, Connecticut Deaf Theatre, and Ballet Arkansas. As an educator, she teaches at the Arkansas School for the Deaf and in community-based programs, developing inclusive curricula for Deaf and disabled youth. Brandy regularly presents nationally on disability justice, access, and consent-based dance education.

Sandra Minton, PhD, Professor Emeritus was full time faculty at the University of Northern Colorado 1972-1999. Later, she taught dance for Denver and Littleton public schools and interdisciplinary teachers' workshops through the University. Her books include Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation, Using Movement to Teach Academics, Thinking with the Dancing Brain: Embodying Neuroscience (Rima Faber co-author) and Rechoreographing Learning: Dance as a Way to Bridge the Mind-Body Divide in Education. Minton's research is on creativity, self-esteem, kinesthesis and mental imagery. Her study of high school students creative thinking skills was summarized in Critical Links, a national publication of the Arts Education Partnership. Most recently, she wrote a chapter on quantitative research for the Intellect Handbook of Dance Education Research. She was 1999 National Dance Association Artist/Scholar, 2001 Fulbright Scholar to Finland and received NDEO's 2020 Lifetime Achievement award.

Jessica Moore is a dance artist, teacher, and choreographer based in Columbia, SC. She is the Dance Education Specialist at Columbia College,

where she oversees the development, instruction, and mentorship of rising Dance Education majors. She earned her MFA degree in Dance, Performance, and Choreography from SUNY Brockport and her BA in Dance Education from Columbia College. Jessica has received several grants to pursue and further her research on Native American dance and cultural traditions; presenting this research at Dance Studies Association, South Carolina Dance Association, and NDEO conferences among others. As a member of the Waccamaw Siouan Indian tribe, she continues to compete in powwows, hone her craft and spread knowledge of Native American customs, representation, and embodiment across the country. Her creative work integrates contemporary/modern aesthetics with cultural forms, while her academic research interests include cultural representation, cultural appropriation, and increasing diversity in dance/dance education. Building a community amongst students, performers, teachers, and artists by sparking a dialogue to create awareness remain at the heart of Jessica's approach.

Annika Mossberg is a dancer, teaching artist, dance educator, and Registered Somatic Movement Educator and Therapist (RSMET) based in the Pacific Northwest. With over 30 years of experience in the dance industry, Annika utilizes somatics, mindfulness, and expressive arts to foster intentionality and holistic well-being within dance communities. She works collaboratively with studio owners, educators, dancers, and families to create inclusive care protocols that address physical, emotional, mental, and social/spiritual needs. Annika's teaching approach, rooted in both classical training and creative engagement, emphasizes human development, accessibility, and the integration of self-care and mental health practices to prevent burnout. She incorporates methods such as BrainDance and DanceAbility to promote embodiment and inclusive learning.

Kellyn Mylechreest is a dancer, choreographer, movement educator, and writer based in NYC & NJ. She holds her M.F.A. in Choreography from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and her B.F.A. in Contemporary Dance from the UNC School of the Arts. Kellyn serves as an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Dance at Queens College, Medgar Evers College, and Queensborough Community College. She also serves as the Program Coordinator for Morningside DanceWorX at Teachers College. As an artist, Kellyn has worked with companies such as Twyla Tharp, Linked Dance Theatre, Houseworld Immersive, City Lyric Opera, FIT Dance Company, Second Avenue Dance Company, RAVE Theatre Festival, NACHMO Film Fest, and more. Additionally, she has performed works by Ohad Naharin, Lucinda Childs, Lar Lubovitch, Shen Wei Dance Arts, Ori Flomin, Betsy Coker, Mariel Pettee, and more. As an educator, she has worked with New York City Ballet, Alvin Ailey's Arts in Education programming, and internationally with the Salvation Army. She is a fourth-year doctoral student in Dance Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, where her research investigates surveillance and power dynamics in dance education, and how holistic and trauma-informed dance pedagogy can create healthier dancers of body and mind.

N

Andrew Nemr - Mentored by Gregory Hines, Andrew Nemr is an international artist, teacher

and speaker. His work has spanned the music, dance, theatre, and visual arts worlds, exploring art as a vehicle for storytelling and community building. Described as “a masterly tapper” by the New York Times, Andrew has played with Grammy Award winning musicians across multiple genres, and co-founded the Tap Legacy Foundation, Inc. (along with Hines).
Andrew has been on faculty at both Broadway Dance Center (NYC) and Steps on Broadway (NYC), an adjunct lecturer at Queens College and Montclair State University, and designed and launched the tap dance program at the McBurney YMCA (NYC). Andrew has toured internationally as an educator in Hong Kong, Taipei, Tokyo, London, Berlin, Barcelona, Stockholm, Costa Rica, Lebanon, Canada and throughout the United States at local dance schools, festivals, conventions, and even a TED Conference! Andrew’s teaching theory has been influenced by his mentors Henry LeTang, Jimmy Slyde, Savion Glover, Ted Levy, Gregory Hines, and his study of the work of Steve Condos. Other influences have come from time spent with Harold Cromer, Dr. Bunny Briggs, Dr. James “Buster” Brown, LeRoy Myers, Ernest “Brownie” Brown, Henry “Phace” Roberts, Mable Lee, Tina Pratt, and Dianne Walker. Andrew’s work has been recognized with numerous awards including a TED Fellowship, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and commissions from Google and Deutsche Grammophon. Andrew is recorded on the Grammy nominated recording Itsbynne Reel by Dave Eggar, the DVD Documentary and companion album Tuesdays at Mona's by Mona’s Hot Four, and narrates the DanceTime Publications DVD, Tap Dance History: From Vaudeville to Film. He is the topic of the documentary short film Identity: The Andrew Nemr Story, and hosts the weekly podcast, Talking Notes.

Dr. Marissa Nesbit is deeply committed to the idea that all children should have the opportunity to attain an excellent dance education centered in the arts. As Assistant Professor and Dance Education Coordinator at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Dr. Nesbit supports aspiring dance educators to craft rigorous and engaging learning experiences that immerse their students in the creative process. Currently she teaches dance education methods courses, supervises student teachers, and engages in qualitative research projects that investigate aspects of dance curriculum and pedagogy in K12 contexts. Dr. Nesbit is a Language of Dance Master Practitioner and holds a PhD in Art Education from The Ohio State University and MFA in Dance from Texas Woman’s University.

Nancy Ng is the Executive Director of Creativity and Policy and Director of Early Education at Luna Dance & Creativity in Berkeley, California. Working with her colleagues on Luna’s Professional Learning faculty she facilitates professional development workshops; and mentors and coaches teaching artists, teachers, and social service workers. Ng was the Administrative Director and a resident choreographer with San Francisco’s Asian American Dance Performance. During her eight-year tenure with AADP, she presented the work of regional, national and international artists; directed outreach and education programs; and choreographed dances which delved into Asian female stereotypes, immigration and racism. As an arts educator and leader, Ng’s service includes past president of the California Dance Education Association, former board trustee for the National Guild for Community Arts Education, editorial review board member for National Dance Education

Organization's (NDEO) journal, Dance Education in Practice, and Justice Equity Diversity Inclusion initiative committee member for NDEO. She served on the California state department of education's advisory committees to develop the Pre-School Learning Foundations (2008), and to revise the California Arts Standards and Framework PK/TK through 12th grade.

Peggy Hongduc Nguyen, a Vietnamese-American Dance artist, teacher, and children's book author is trained in various movement traditions and educational pedagogies thanks to Melba Morris Ballet, LA County HS for the Arts, UCLA's World Arts & Cultures Dance B.A., Malaya Filipino American Dance, UCLA Masters and Teacher Credential Program, Language of Dance® (LOD), Pasadena Lindy Groove, Luna Dance Institute, Mettler Studios, and a National Board Certification in Early and Middle Childhood P.E/Dance. After 19+ years serving as a credentialed elementary multi-subject and Dance teacher, she continues to grow in her purpose, craft, and leadership thanks to her LAUSD Dance sisters, the coolest partner and kids, and the joys and challenges her students bring every day.

O

Kyla Olson is an Associate Professor of Practice in the School of Theatre & Dance and serves as the Head of Dance at Texas Tech University. She holds a BFA in Dance from West Texas A&M University and an MFA in Dance from Sam Houston State University. Kyla is also an ABT® Certified Teacher in Pre-Primary-Level 3 of the ABT® National Training Curriculum and has her STOTT PILATES® Certified Instructor for Reformer: Level 1 Certification and 200-Hour Yoga Certification. Her research interests include musical theatre dance, devised work, and somatic practices. She also works as a professional choreographer and director, most recently with TEXAS Outdoor Musical (2024). For more information, visit her website (kylaolsondance.com) or social media (@kylaolsondance).

Catherine Oppenheimer danced professionally with New York City Ballet and Twyla Tharp dance companies, before moving to New Mexico in 1994 and founding the National Dance Institute of New Mexico (NDI-NM) as Artistic Director. NDI-NM currently serves nearly 8,000 children each year in public schools. In 2005, Ms. Oppenheimer initiated an effort to create a public, residential high school for the performing and visual arts. New Mexico School for the Arts (NMSA) opened in 2016 with Ms. Oppenheimer serving as its founder and the chairwoman of its public and private boards. In 2021-2022, Ms. Oppenheimer served as President and CEO of Sky Railway, Santa Fe's adventure train. Catherine's work, with many others, has garnered several awards including a National Arts and Humanities Award: a Coming Up Taller Award (NDI-NM, 2003); a United States Department of Education: National Blue Ribbon for closing the achievement gap (NMSA, 2016); a Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts in 2016; and a 2026 Mayor's Award for Excellence in the Arts. Catherine is a devotee of meditation and a certified Yoga and Pilates instructor. She currently serves as a Trustee of Save the Children and the Exodus Ensemble. She is a lifetime trustee for NDI-NM.

P

Margaret Sunghe Paek (she/her, MFA) is a collaborative dance artist whose research engages in practices of curiosity, compassion, and rigorous play as methodologies of inclusion and ensemble making. As a mixed-race maker, middle-child, mother, educator, performer, and community builder, she finds connection in liminality. She deeply values her relationships with contact improvisation, Ensemble Thinking™, Alexander Technique, Barbara Dilley, Loren Kiyoshi Dempster, and the collectives- Lower Left, Resident Artists, UhOh Trio, and Dr. Shamell Bell's Street Dance Activism. Margaret has been a movement educator since 1990, teaching all ages, in a variety of venues, all over the world. Her collaborative choreographic work has been presented in venues including the Whitney Museum Biennial, Judson Memorial Church (NYC), and Links Hall (Chicago). In 2015, Margaret moved from NYC to the ancestral homelands of the Menominee and Ho-Chunk people (Appleton, Wisconsin) to teach at Lawrence University where she co-created and co-directs the minor and interdisciplinary area "Dance: Embodied Collaborative Practice." Currently, she co-organizes the Ensemble Thinking™ Certification program with Lower Left, works with Resident Artist on a film documenting their performance practice with their kids over the last 15 years, and is developing a new work with UhOh Trio. www.margaretpaek.com

Vandita Parikh is an acclaimed Indian folk dance educator, choreographer, and cultural ambassador dedicated to preserving and promoting India's rich folk traditions. She is the recipient of the President's Award (2011), presented by the then President of India, Pratibha Patil, in recognition of her significant contributions to folk art and culture.
In 2000, Vandita established Nruthyashakti Dance School of Arts (NSDA) in the United States to create awareness of India's lesser-known folk forms and to present high-quality performances that reflect their depth, beauty, and cultural significance. She pioneered curriculum-based folk dance education in Dallas, designing structured syllabi and examination systems that integrate both theoretical knowledge and performance practice. Since its inception, NSDA has presented over 800 performances and raised more than $400,000 for nonprofits and charities worldwide through student-led Dance for Service initiatives, making it one of the premier institutions for folk arts education.
Since 2016, Vandita has led impactful outreach programs including Dance for Community Outreach, Dance Back to the Temples, and Nritya Seva, through which students contribute over 50 volunteer hours annually while connecting dance with shastra and service.
Her achievements have been further recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award from LPS Gujarati Samaj, an Impactor Award from Shubham Foundation (2025), and the Best Performance Artist Award from Plano Arts (December 2025).

Chell Parkins is the inaugural Arnhold Director of Dance Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research explores the experiences of Latinx communities engaged in culturally relevant and sustaining dance programs. Throughout her 32-year career as a dance educator, advocate, performer, and choreographer, she has taught music, theater and dance in private and public sectors from

preschool through college levels. Parkins recent projects have included Consultant to the Community Outreach Coordinator and Scholar in Residence at Ballet Hispanico, participating as a panelist in the Shirley Hall Bass Educators Forum, and teaching ongoing workshops to the child and adolescent psychiatry fellows at Oregon Health and Science University.

Charles Parks, known as King Charles, is a Chicago Footwork pioneer from the South Side of Chicago and an internationally recognized teaching artist, performer, and cultural ambassador. For more than 20 years, he has represented Chicago Footwork globally through performance, cultural exchange, and education. He was selected as a Next Level USA artist, participating in U.S. State Department cultural diplomacy initiatives through hip hop and dance. King Charles created Creative Netwerk's first standards aligned Chicago Footwork curriculum, embedding vernacular street dance lineage within National Core Arts Standards while preserving cultural integrity. He has taught at universities including Harvard and Dartmouth, in school districts nationwide, in community spaces, and internationally. He is the founder of Creation Global, an international Chicago Footwork crew with more than 100 members worldwide. King Charles formerly served as Artistic Director of The FootworKINGZ, a renowned Chicago dance company featured on America's Got Talent and America's Best Dance Crew. His commercial credits include touring with Madonna and performing with artists such as Elton John, Will.I.Am, Omarion, Twista, Willow Smith, and Bakermat, as well as campaigns with Nike and Verizon. He is co author of Elvin Discovers Chicago Footwork and co founder of Chicago Footworkology.

Julie L. Pentz - Julie's contributions to the dance field have traveled in the international dance community and her credits include guest teaching and performance appearances in Italy, Spain, Ghana, and Kuwait. Julie has been teaching at Kansas State University for 20 years and is a full professor of teaching jazz and tap dance. She is active in the National Dance Educators Organization serving on the advisory board directing students from 2017 – 2020 and now serves on the Executive Committee as the organizations Recording Secretary. In 2019 Julie accepted a position as a Global Goodwill Ambassador and Human Peace Ambassador, representing the United States of America. Julie serves as a national judge for dance competitions and is a trained HealthRhythms and Dance for Parkinson's Disease facilitator. Prior to Julie's return to graduate study she performed with The National Tap Ensemble out of Washington, DC and worked with master tap teachers that include Gregory Hines, Savion Glover, and Brenda Buffalino. Julie's current research, Tap To Togetherness Across Populations is examining and enhancing family relationships, measuring physical movement, and looking at Parent perceptions/enjoyment/and parent-child connectedness and how they relate to physical activity.

Josey Pickett, Ph.D. is a mother, interdisciplinary artist, researcher, and educator based in the Southwest Border Region of the U.S. She is currently the Theatre and Dance Facilitator for the Socorro Independent School District and the Artistic Director of Somos Performance Group in El Paso, TX. Her current research focuses on the role of reflective practices in pre-service dance teachers' development of pedagogical content knowledge and critical consciousness. She has worked as a guest stage director, assistant

director, choreographer and performer for El Paso Opera, Opera UTEP, UTEP Dinner Theatre, UTEP Department of Theatre and Dance, NMSU Department of Theatre Arts, Abilene Christian University, Mountain Movement Dance Company, Zilker Theatrical Productions, and Broadway by the Bay. Learn more at joseypickett.com and somosep.org

Darryl Pilate is a Dance and Theater Resource teacher who serves K-12 dance and theater educators in Baltimore County Public Schools based in Towson, Maryland. As the resource teacher, he will provide support to educators through the development and implementation of curriculum, the acquisition of resources and funding, and conducting periodic professional development with teachers. Formerly a dance educator himself, Darryl believes that arts education is an essential part in creating a well-rounded student receiving a world-class education. As he transitions into an administrative role, he hopes to lead professional development, learn about arts administration roles, and promote the arts outside of the classroom. Darryl believes that effective leaders help enrich student experience by equipping educators with the appropriate tools and resources to provide quality instruction. Prior to his role as resource teacher, Darryl began the dance program at High Point High School in Beltsville, Maryland. In his former role as dance teacher, he ran a successful program of over 150 students and managed multiple after school student-led dance organizations which created performance opportunities. Darryl is currently the Artistic Director of LightSwitch Dance Theater, a Washington, DC dance company with a mission of creating movement art that speaks to social justice issues for minority groups such as the LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC populations. Darryl continues to support the education and training of Maryland dance teachers through the Maryland Dance Educators' Association (MDEA). Over the last five years, Darryl has presented multiple sessions at the annual conference such as new educator training and movement classes in jazz and hip hop. He served on the MDEA board as the K-12 Representative and currently the Executive Member-at large. While at High Point High School, Darryl received the “HP UNITED” award for his excellence in leading the Positive Behavior or Interventions and Supports team for the 2019-2020 school year. Darryl holds a Bachelors of Science in Dance from Texas State University and a Masters in Business Administration from Texas Woman's University. As a Grand Canyon University student, he will be pursuing the educational doctorate degree (Ed.D.) program with an emphasis in K-12 Organizational Leadership.

Felix Pitre, Senior Teaching Artist: Felix has worked with Dancing Classrooms as a Teaching Artist since 2009. He has taught elementary, middle and high school students across the NYC Metro Area, bringing his love and appreciation of dance, and in particular the Lindy Hop, to all of his classes. Felix has studied Lindy Hop and other vernacular Jazz dances with numerous instructors, nationally and locally throughout NYC, including the late great Frankie Manning, Roddy Caravella, Bill Kline, Matt Bedell and Laura Jeffers. His career as a performer includes opening for Jennifer Hudson, and dancing in various troupes including the Big Apple Lindy Hoppers, the Lindy Hop All-Stars and The Twilight Toe Tapping Syncopaters.

ViolaMarie Pitts is from Greenbelt, Maryland and is a senior at Towson University. She is majoring in Dance Performance and Choreography with PK–12 Dance Education

Certification and plans to graduate in December 2026. She is currently in her student teaching internship at Cedarmere Elementary School in Reisterstown Maryland and Relay Elementary in Halethorpe, Maryland.

Nina Pongratz is a dance educator, choreographer, and performer with experience spanning multiple continents and educational settings. She currently teaches dance and is the Visual and Performing Arts Chair at McDonogh School in Maryland. Nina earned her B.A. in Dance and Media & Communications from Muhlenberg College (2013), M.A. in Contemporary Dance Performance from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick (2015), and a Post-Certificate in Anatomical Sciences from The University of Edinburgh (2017), deepening her understanding of the body's mechanics and movement.Her professional teaching career includes the Director of Dance at the Middlesex School in Massachusetts and founding Head of Dance at the Independent Theatre Workshop in Dublin, Ireland. She has also held visiting artist positions at Wheaton College and taught at the University of Limerick, Ireland. Nina's research includes the development of specialized dance classes for children with Dyspraxia/DCD, creating alternative pedagogical approaches while building technique and strength (funded by the Irish Arts Council). She has also worked extensively with underserved communities and students with disabilities, demonstrating her dedication to making dance accessible to all.Nina dances with Full Circle Dance Company (Baltimore) under the direction of Ms. Donna L. Jacobs.

Tabbatha Prewitt holds a Bachelor's degree in Physical Education and a Master's degree in Dance Education. She has taught secondary dance for the past 14 years at Odyssey Institute For Advanced & International Studies (OIAIS), where she has played a key role in shaping a comprehensive and rigorous dance program. Tabbatha is the primary author of the curriculum for all International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP) Dance courses at OIAIS, designing vertically aligned instruction that centers student voice, inquiry, and creative process. She has presented at professional development sessions and has led IB Dance discussion groups, supporting educators in implementing IB philosophy through meaningful dance pedagogy. Committed to interdisciplinary learning, Tabbatha co-leads an annual collaborative unit between dance and Language & Literature, using written text as a foundation for choreographic exploration and analysis. Her teaching practice emphasizes access, inclusion, and cultural relevance, providing scholars with multiple entry points into movement creation. Tabbatha's passion for dance extends beyond performance; she views dance as a powerful tool for self-expression, critical thinking, and cultural understanding. She is dedicated to creating spaces where scholars can learn about themselves, connect with others, and engage deeply with diverse cultures through movement.

Samyuktha Punthambekar is an Indo-Canadian Bharatanatyam artist, educator, cultural policy strategist and arts manager who is now based in Lubbock, Texas. A graduate of the renowned Kalakshetra Foundation in Chennai, India, she brings over twenty-five plus years of performance experience and fifteen years of teaching to her artistic practice. Her training spans Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Indian folk dance, and classical Carnatic music, enabling her to bridge traditional forms with contemporary

inquiry while exploring themes of identity, storytelling, and cultural preservation.
As the Artistic Director of Kalasadhana Dance Company (KDC), Samyuktha has choreographed and performed in numerous original productions, collaborating with artists across disciplines. She has toured extensively across India, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America, presenting Bharatanatyam in both artistic and academic contexts. Her dedication to integrating Indian classical dance into education has led to partnerships with the Government of Canada, the Toronto District School Board, and the Peel Region School Board. She has also worked with the Municipal and Federal Government in Canada as a cultural policy strategist. Samyuktha is currently pursuing her Doctorate in Fine Arts (Arts Administration track) at Texas Tech University. She also holds a Master of Fine Arts in Dance from Annamalai University.

Denise Purvis, PhD, MFA, BA is a professional dancer, choreographer, and dance educator with over twenty years of experience. Denise's professional experience includes directing her own dance company, Shifting Velocity Dance, performing at domestic and international dance festivals, and dancing with Richmond dance company, Starr Foster Dance Project. Purvis currently serves as dance lead at the Woodside High School magnet program in Newport News, VA and teaches yoga at Virginia Commonwealth.

Q

Molly Quinn is a lifelong dancer with extensive training and teaching experience at studios across Massachusetts. She graduated from Salem State University in 2021 with a degree in Dance and Education, and a certificate in Dance Education. She also has certifications from Progressive Ballet Technique and Acrobatic Arts. Her choreography was showcased at the American College Dance Association's adjudicated concert and has received accolades at both regional and national dance competitions. As an experienced dance competition judge throughout New England and the proud dance studio owner herself, Molly is deeply immersed in the dance community. She has performed with notable groups such as DanceWorks Boston and the OnStage Dance Company, participating in events like OnStage 360, Boston Dance Studios' Pride Showcase, the Dancing Queerly Festival, and the Salem Arts Festival. Molly continues to pursue her passion for performance throughout New England.
In addition to her dance career, Molly is a dedicated special education teacher. Her love of teaching and passion for dance inspire her to create inclusive, empowering experiences for all dancers.

R

Rebecca Rabideau is the Dance Program Director at Glendale Community College in Glendale, Arizona. Originally from Saratoga Springs, New York, she received her Masters of Fine Arts in Choreography and Performance from the State University of New York College at Brockport and her Bachelor of Science in Dance from Skidmore College. She has studied a variety of dance forms including Irish Step Dance and the Indian Classical Dance form Bharata Natyam, with a focused study on Jazz, Tap and Modern Dance, specifically Limon, Cunningham and Laban-based techniques. Rebecca has been teaching dance since the age

of 17 in a variety of settings including private studios, colleges and universities, and in programs for adults with disabilities and adults with Parkinson's and dementia.

Callie Rekas is a dance and drama educator and artist. She recently completed graduate school at NYU, receiving her M.A. in Dance Education with an emphasis in Ballet Pedagogy. Callie grew up in Bloomington, Indiana, and received her B.A. in Theatre & Drama from Indiana University. After building an extensive theatre resume, she moved to Los Angeles to focus on on-camera technique and joined SAG-AFTRA in her time there. Callie is an American Ballet Theatre certified teacher (Pre-Primary-Level 7) and has taught students of every age and skill level. She is passionate about bridging technique and performance, as her two greatest loves are ballet and musical theatre. As of fall 2023, Callie is pursuing her doctorate in Arts Education at Indiana University and teaching there as an Associate Instructor.

Michael Remson - A 2018 Milestone Award recipient from the National Guild of Community Arts Education for service to arts education, Michael Remson maintains an active career as a working artist, arts administrator/advocate, educator, and author. He currently serves as President & CEO of KeyNote, home of San Diego Youth Symphony, where he leads strategy, development, and collaborations for one of Southern California's leading nonprofits. KeyNote's flagship youth orchestra, community, and early childhood programs serve 3500+ families annually. Previously, Dr. Remson was Executive & Artistic Director of AFA, Houston's largest music education non-profit. He has taught music at the college and K-12 level for 20+ years, delivered dozens of guest lectures and master classes, and has taught music as part of dance education curricula for 15+ years, first at Houston Ballet Academy and now at San Diego Civic Youth Ballet. His course Music Education for Dancers (Human Kinetics) is his third publication. Dr. Remson is also an accomplished composer with works including collaborations with Houston Ballet principal Oliver Halkowich. Dr. Remson was Composer-in-Residence with the Ulster Orchestra in Belfast, Northern Ireland, through a grant from Americans for the Arts. He is a graduate of New York University, University of Houston, and Carnegie Mellon University.

Leah Repenshek is a fourth year student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where she is studying elementary education and early childhood education as well as certificates in dance and dance education. Leah has long had a passion for education and dance, and has been inspired by the intersection of the two fields. Her first experience teaching and choreographing began in private studios. At UW, she has many experiences performing in the dance department concerts in 2024, 2025 and 2026. Leah also attended the NDEO conference in the Fall of 2025, where her passion for dance education continued to grow. She currently performs and competes with nationally awarded Barrio Dance Factory hip hop team. She is also currently teaching with the UW Dance Exchange at a local community center and elementary schools teaching kindergarteners to fifth graders creative movement. In spring of 2027 Leah will be a part of the first cohort to graduate with a license in dance education from UW Madison. She hopes to continue to dance, explore and perform, all while learning foundations that she can take into her teaching as a dance educator.

Rachel DeForrest Repinz, MFA, PhD ABD (she/her) is a visually impaired multidisciplinary artist-scholar based in Brooklyn, NY. Rachel's work is rooted in the postmodern tradition and disability aesthetic lineage, weaving together movement, text, time, and sound as primary modes of inquiry through a Disabled worldview. Engaging access as creative praxis, experimental approaches to audio description, and improvisational time-based performance practices, her work takes an experimental, embodied, approach to accessibility. Rachel received a BA and MFA in Dance from SUNY Buffalo State University and Temple University, respectively, and is a current PhD in Dance candidate at Texas Woman's University. She serves as the Advisor of Dance and Disability for the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), and was awarded as a Dance/NYC 'Disability. Dance. Artistry.' Dance and Social Justice Fellow (2023). Rachel founded and artistically directs RACHEL:dancers (spoken as Rachel and Dancers), a multi-modal dance performance company, and co-directs Bashi Arts with Enya-Kalia Jordan. Rachel is on faculty at Temple University, is an administrator for the Hunter College Dance Education programs, and serves as a Staff Writer and Editorial Board member for thINKingDANCE. Her artistic and scholarly work has been presented nationally and internationally. Some of her favorite venues include Judson Memorial Church (2025), La MaMa ETC (2024), Dixon Place (2024), the Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance (2024), Movement Research (2022), the University of the West Indies Barbados (2018), and the NDEO national conferences (2018, 2019, 2022, 2024). Rachel has worked with esteemed choreographers including Merián Soto, Heidi Latsky, Sidra Bell, Abdur-Rahim Jackson, Dr. S. Ama Wray, Awilda Sterling-Duprey, Carlos R.A. Jones, and as a principal dancer for Enya Kalia Creations, among others.

Robin Rhodes is a dancer, educator, and scholar whose work explores the intersections of sacred dance, faith, race, embodiment, and decolonized pedagogy. She is a doctoral student in Arts Administration and a Fine Arts doctoral scholar, with research and creative practice centered on Black American sacred dance traditions, embodied leadership, and inclusive teaching practices for adult and non-traditional dancers.Her professional background spans higher education, community-based arts work, and church-based dance ministry. Across these settings, Robin emphasizes the body as a site of spiritual knowledge, cultural memory, and resistance. Her work challenges Eurocentric norms in dance education by centering experiential knowledge, accessibility, and culturally affirming pedagogical approaches. Robin is a co-author of How Institutional and Cultural Dynamics Converge to Create Paradoxical Experiences for Academic Dance Leaders in the United States and is developing Scrub Bottom Dance, a faith-based nonprofit committed to serving adults historically excluded from traditional dance spaces. She has also completed a 200-hour yoga teacher training, integrating somatic practice with Christian theology and justice-centered frameworks. Through scholarship, teaching, and movement, Robin advocates for ethical transmission of sacred dance traditions and embodied approaches to equity, diversity, inclusion, and access.

Shola K. Roberts - Dance is purpose and intention is something that Dr. Shola K. Roberts strives to communicate with those she engages with. Dr. Shola K. Roberts is an international performing professional dance artist, dance educator, choreographer, cultural enthusiast,

and fitness instructor based in Arizona and Brooklyn, New York by way of Grenada, WI. She serves on the Arizona State University Herberger Institute Music, Dance, & Theatre Faculty, as an Assistant Professor. Dr. Roberts is also the Founder and Artistic Executive Director of Dance Grenada Incorporated an organization rooted in creating a network for international and local Grenadian dance artists. Her endeavors continue to illuminate as she has received a number of press features from the prominent Essence Magazine and Black Enterprise for the work of this international festival. Dr. Roberts, a proud Grenadian American, and has had the opportunity to work with many renowned dance companies and choreographers. Her credits include performances with Kowteff West African Dance Company under the Artistic direction of Sewaa Codrington, Oyu Oro under the Artistic direction of La Mora, Fritzalyn Hector whom she performed for the 2021 Dance Africa film: Vwa zanset yo: y'ap pale, n'ap danse!, which earned a Bessie Award. In 2023, she founded the Shola K. Roberts Dance Company, which made its premiere in Scottsdale, Arizona, with the original choreographed piece entitled 'De Spririt is Callin…' Her artistry has also been displayed in the commercial realm where she served as one of the dancer's/ choreographers for Grenada's own four-time winning Groovy Soca Monarch King Dash. In February 2020, she was selected to perform as a dancer for the international soca king Machel Montano in his final concert series Machel Monday: The Wedding. Dr. Roberts recently defended her dissertation within Columbia University' Dance Education Program. Her research focus is grounded in the philosophy of Ubuntu while utilizing a Culturally Relevant pedagogical approach in developing curriculum that addresses Grenada's Folk dance in higher education as means to inspire and empower learners. The circles/communities in which they come from, pushing them to use those experiences to influence their development as a holistic citizen in this global community.

Jesus Rodales "Maddchill" - Creative Netwerk DJ and Dance Teaching Artist Jesus Rodales, known as Maddchill, is a dancer, DJ, music producer, and educator originally from Hillsboro, Oregon. He began his dance journey as a freestyler specializing in Tutting and Popping and has long been dedicated to building community through movement and music. Jesus is a former member of the Portland Trail Blazers' Rip City Crew and played a key role in introducing and cultivating the Litefeet movement in Portland. Since 2020, his focus has expanded into music production and DJing, exploring the relationship between sound and movement as tools for cultural expression and community connection. Now based in Los Angeles, Maddchill leads Creative Netwerk's DJ programming within LA Unified School District. In collaboration with Creative Netwerk's national staff, he has developed a standards aligned DJ curriculum that integrates cultural history, music production, and social emotional learning into classroom settings.

Allegra Romita (MA, CMA, EdM, RYT) is co-creator of Functional Awareness: Anatomy in Action; and co-author of Functional Awareness: Anatomy in Action for Dancers and Functional Awareness and Yoga: an Anatomical Guide to the Body in Reflective Practice. Allegra serves as the Program Administrator and Faculty for NYU Steinhardt Dance Education program. Since 2011, Allegra has been performing regionally and nationally with Sydnie L. Mosley Dances and is the Artistic Visioning Partner with the collective. Allegra graduated from the University

of Michigan with honors with a BFA in Dance and a minor in Movement Science. She received her MA in Dance Education from NYU Steinhardt and EdM in Motor Learning & Control from Teachers College, Columbia University. Her passion for somatic investigation led her to certification (CMA) in Laban Movement Analysis through the Laban/Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies. Allegra teaches at Brooklyn Yoga Project and Heatwise Yoga in Brooklyn, NY, and co-teaches in the teacher training programs at both studios.

Nancy Romita (MFA, RSME, M.AmSAT RYT) is Senior Lecturer at Towson University (http://www.towson.edu/dance/fac-wanich-romita.asp), co-founder of Functional Awareness® (www.functionalawareness.org) is certified in dance rehabilitation training (WDPT/NYC) & current director of the Alexander Technique MidAtlantic Teacher Training Course. Romita is former Artistic Director of NanDance NYC (1981-1985) & The Moving Company 1993-2003), choreographed over 50 works at such venues as DTW/New York Live Arts, the 92ndStY, The Baltimore Museum of Art, The Kennedy Center, Her research has been presented at IADMS, NDEO, CORPS de Ballet International, Alexander Technique International Congress. She is co-author of several books published by Oxford University Press. The second edition of Functional Awareness: Anatomy in Action for Dancers recently released June 2023.

Christine Rudy-Reed (MA) is an arts educator, professional learning leader, dance artist, and advocate dedicated to equity, access and inclusion in arts education. An educator with demonstrated experience in arts administration and education management, Christine is skilled in effective professional learning; standards-based learning and standards-based grading; arts curriculum, assessment, instruction and intervention; arts integration and interdisciplinary practice; and teacher coaching and mentoring. Christine serves educators as Director of the Southern Counties California Arts Project (SouthCAP), a regional site of The California Arts Project (TCAP), housed in the School of Music and Dance at San Diego State University. There, she leads professional learning, leadership development, and strategic planning for arts education leaders and teachers at schools and districts in Southern California and across the state. Prior to The California Arts Project, Christine served students and educators in Ohio, Illinois, and California as a dance educator, teaching artist, program director, arts-focused schools specialist, and grant resource teacher. Christine has taught since 2009 in public TK-12 settings; has built new dance programs from the ground up both in Ohio and Illinois; and has guided teachers and education leaders on developing, implementing, and sustaining high-quality arts programming. She has moved on stages, in classrooms, and throughout communities as a dancer, stilt artist, teaching artist, and student in dance companies, community organizations, and institutions of higher education. Christine is a PK-12 Mentorship Committee Member for the National Dance Education Organization, a founding board member and former Board Secretary of the Illinois Dance Education Organization, a founding board member of Prismatic, and a curriculum developer and consultant.

Nile Russell is originally from Baltimore, MD. He earned a B.A. in Dance from Connecticut College, where he was mentored by talented teachers including Dan Wagoner, Lan Lan Wang,

Jeff Rebudal, Robyne Watkin, David Dorfman, Eddie Taketa, and Jeremy Nelson. Nile traveled to Mysore, India, in 2002 to pursue Temple and Architecture studies and Bharatanatyam dance at the University of Mysore. In 2004, he moved to New York and performed with Silver-Brown Dance, LeeSaar The Company, Luis Lara Malvacias, Stefanie Nelson Dance Group, Naganuma Dance, and co-founded CaN Dance. In 2009, Nile joined Pilobolus Dance Theater as a dancer and later served as Dance Captain for the touring company. He relocated to Denver, CO, in 2014 and worked as a freelance artist, a movement consultant for the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, a choreographer for the Arvada Center and Neighborhood Music Theater, and as an educator at various schools and studios across Colorado, including Denver School of the Arts, Parker Dance Academy, and the Colorado Conservatory of Dance. While living in Denver, he performed with Rosie Herrera Dance Theatre and collaborated on and directed commissions for Crystal Bridges American Art Museum, the Momentary, the Clayton Members Club & Hotel, and multiple music videos. He has also taught movement workshops for California State University and continued working with Pilobolus as a Teaching Artist. He is currently based in Durham, NC, and is the Director of Education for the American Dance Festival.

S

Lucy Salazar is a Nuevomexican born in Agua Fria, NM. She has been dancing since childhood as her grandfather, uncles, aunts and father were all musicians. They played the fiddle, accordion, guitar, harmonica and mandolin which are the traditional instruments played for Bailes de Salón. She learned these traditional New Mexican Folk dances (Bailes de Salón) from her parents and grandparents and has made it her passion to preserve and teach these dances to the younger generation and anyone who may want to learn them. She is in the process of compiling these dances in written form with steps, choreography and videos to preserve these dances for future generations.
She has been involved in teaching these dances, working through the New Mexico Arts Division, The National Hispanic Cultural Center, the American Folklore Society and ANGF (Asociacíon Nacional de Grupos Folklóricos)and private events throughout New Mexico.
She is a 2025 Fellow Award Recipient from Dance USA. She is a Tai Chi for Arthritis Instructor.

Liz Salganek, Artistic Director - National Dance Institute New Mexico - Liz grew up in Santa Fe, where she trained extensively in ballet, jazz, and modern dance, and performed in professional dance and musical theater productions including performances at the James A. Little, Greer Garson Theater, Santa Fe Playhouse, Center for Contemporary Arts, and other venues. In 1997 she moved to New York, and in 2001 she earned her B.A. in Dance from Barnard College of Columbia University, graduating summa cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa. She joined the faculty of the Barnard Dance Department after graduation and danced with several modern dance companies including Buglisi/Foreman Dance, Dana Ruttenberg Dance Group, and others, at venues including the Joyce Theater, Joyce Soho, St. Mark's Church and Judson Memorial Church. After returning to New Mexico in 2006, she became certified in Pilates and began pursuing dance education. She joined the NDI New Mexico staff in 2006 and has since taught in all NDI New Mexico

programs including In-School, Advanced Teams, After-School and Residency programs. Liz brings her love of teaching and of NDI New Mexico's mission to her approach to managing the artistic department of the organization, with a focus on building a staff of individuals dedicated to the well-being of the children of New Mexico, using the arts to engage, inspire, challenge, and support our youth to grow into their full potential.

Dr. Dale Schmid is a nationally recognized educational leader whose work bridges policy, research, and practice. He serves as an associate adjunct professor in the Ed.D. Dance program at Teachers College, Columbia University; Research Fellow with the Arnhold Institute for Dance Education Research, Policy & Leadership; and an independent consultant.
A Past President of NDEO, Dr. Schmid currently represents NDEO to the National Coalition for Arts Standards and serves as senior advisor to NDEO's DELTA initiative, a national effort to establish a unified, consensus-driven framework for dance teacher preparation. He previously served as Co-Chair of Governance and Co-Facilitator of the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards, and NDEO's co–project manager for the U.S. Department of Education–funded Connected Arts Network, which advances sustainable, job-embedded professional learning for arts educators with emphasis on equity, inclusion, and social-emotional learning. Dr. Schmid is a contributing author of the National Core Arts Standards, multiple foundational NDEO standards publications, and, most recently, The Intellect Handbook of Dance Education Research (2025). He also served for more than 20 years as New Jersey's Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator. A former professional dancer and teaching artist, his embodied practice continues to inform his scholarship, leadership, and advocacy.

Dani Schofer (they/she/he) is a dance educator, choreographer, and scholar based in Seattle, WA. Dani has taught dance, music, and K-12 core subjects nationally and internationally, and has established curricular programming in K-12 schools, universities, and private studios in Pennsylvania, New York, and Washington State. Their choreographic work has premiered at Base Experimental Arts, the University at Buffalo, Rochester Fringe Festival, the Buffalo Gay Men's Chorus, American Dance Festival, and Muhlenberg College. Dani's choreographic and pedagogical research builds partnerships between professional dancers, public schools, and audience participants to cultivate meaningful movement experiences. Their interdisciplinary research has been presented at Dance Educators Association of Washington State Conference, National Dance Education Organization Conference, International Conference of Dalcroze Studies, American College Dance Association, and the Dalcroze Society of America National Conference. Dani graduated with an MFA in Dance from the University at Buffalo in Spring 2025. An avid composer/musician, Dani is a Dalcroze Teacher candidate from Carnegie Mellon University's Marta Sanchez School. Dani currently works as both a dance educator and the Administrative/Enrollment Manager at Eastside Dance in Redmond, Washington, while pursuing an MA in Elementary Education with K-12 licensure from Western Governors University.

Karen Schupp, MFA, is the associate director of the Herberger Institute School of Music, Dance and Theatre at Arizona State University where she is also a professor of dance. Her research interests include dance competition culture,

dance curriculum and pedagogy in tertiary education, and equity across the spectrum of dance education. Her books include Studying Dance (author), Dance Education and Responsible Citizenship (editor), and Ethical Dilemmas in Dance Education (co-editor with Doug Risner), which won both the Susan W. Stinson Book Award and NDEO's Ruth Lovell Murray Book Award in 2021. Professor Schupp is the Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Dance Education. For more information, please visit http://www.karenschupp.org.

Alison Seidenstricker is an Assistant Professor of Dance at Towson University. She teaches modern dance technique, dance composition, is the Co-Artistic Director of the Fall Towson University Dance Company, and is the Coordinator of the PK-12 Dance Education Program. Seidenstricker spent 12 years producing, performing, choreographing, and teaching in New York City before moving to the Baltimore Community where she was the Dance Educator at Southwest Baltimore Charter School (SBCS), an Expeditionary Learning and Arts Integrated Public Charter School. Alison has a BA in dance from Slippery Rock University, a MFA in Choreography from Purchase College, is a Laban/ Bartenieff Certified Movement Analyst and a Certified Functional Awareness Movement Educator.

Alana Shaw, founder and director of Turning the Wheel, is an inspiring and empowering speaker, teacher, and guide. Alana has facilitated joyful and healing movement events across the country for 35 years. Her dynamic presentation style is both humorous and transforming, and consistently positive and uplifting for her audiences. She holds an MFA in Dance from the University of Colorado with a thesis on healing and reintegration through creative expression. She has co-created and directed 12 highly professional and beautifully crafted touring performances that magically integrate members of the communities they perform in from ages 5 to 90. Alana's books, “Dancing Our Way Home” and “The Body Now”; catalyze her mission to inspire a new paradigm for inclusiveness, and community engagement.

Elizabeth Shea - Reviewed as “a remarkable contemporary dance display”, Elizabeth Shea’s choreography has been produced by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and presented at numerous festivals and major cities across the USA, as well as in Australia, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and China. Liz has been a guest artist for many professional companies and universities, most recently Eisenhower Dance and as a collaborator with NYC-based Stefanie Nelson Dancegroup. Liz presented the site-specific work “Ascension” at the Eskenazi Museum of Art to over 1,000 people; her newest choreography, Rhythm Runs Through It, premiered this year at Dixon Place in NYC and has been invited to RADfest, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Liz also creates extensively in new media and film, screening her work at film festivals internationally. Awards include Best Choreography for the Lens, Best Dance Film, and Best Ensemble. Liz teaches her self-developed somatic system, SomaLab®, yogic practices, and choreographic methods at workshops in the USA and abroad, most recently at the Royal Academy of Dance in London, and Dance Italia, in Lucca, Italy. She was awarded a prestigious Eastman Residency in the Arts and Humanities on Martha's Vineyard to develop a program of somatic practice for non-medical hospice workers and presented at the 2022 Performing Arts Medicine Association International Symposium and the 32nd International Association for Dance

Medicine and Science conference in Limerick, Ireland. A 500-hour Registered Yoga Teacher, Liz is Professor and Director of Contemporary Dance at Indiana University.

Lacey Sheppard is the Apex Arts Magnet Site Coordinator for Brooklyn Park Middle School in Anne Arundel County Public Schools and an adjunct professor in the Dance Department at Towson University. Additionally, she collaborates with the Maryland State Department of Education and Arts Education in Maryland Schools (AEMS) as a dance teaching artist and consultant. Lacey holds a BFA in Dance Performance with K–12 Certification, a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Arts Integration, and a Master's degree in Interdisciplinary Arts Infusion from Towson University. She currently serves as President-Elect of the Maryland Dance Education Association, co-chairs the Maryland Middle School State Dance Showcase, and serves on the board of the Arts Council of Anne Arundel County. In 2024, she received the MDEA Outstanding Leadership in Dance Education Award. Her work has been presented nationally and published in university-level texts.

Jackie Beth Shilcutt has performed, collaborated, and choreographed for various dance projects both stateside and internationally. Dr. Shilcutt is an assistant professor at Utah Tech University and affiliate faculty at New Mexico State University. Jackie Beth's choreography has been presented in venues from Texas to New York to Brazil and Kenya. Her research focuses on implementing an Activist Approach to teaching in dance settings including after-school dance clubs for middle school youth, dance content courses for physical education teacher candidates, community programming, and university dance classes. She is also involved in Youth on the Move, a program originally funded through Paso del Norte Health Foundation geared towards engaging disengaged youth in physical activity.

alexx shilling (she/they) is a movement artist, filmmaker, writer, and educator whose collaborative, multidisciplinary performance pieces prioritize the body as the primary research site for invigorating memory and investigating transformation. Original works have been presented nationally and internationally, with funding from organizations including the California Arts Council, Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Asylum Arts and the Foundation for Contemporary Art along with awards including the Wallis Annenberg Helix Fellowship, David Shneer New Jewish Culture Grant, and the CHIME Mentorship Grant. As a performer, Shilling has worked with numerous choreographers, including Victoria Marks and Richard Rivera/Physual, currently performing with Mimi Yin/NUUM Collective, Daniel Miramontes, and Dance Band in collaboration with Laurel Jenkins and Sarah Leddy. alexx co founded the popular Los Angeles-based dance series, Hi, Solo, the Gold Collective and Gold Series, co directed the interdisciplinary company FIELDSHIFT | FURTHER and with Ann Robideaux, the site specific dance company ann and alexx make dances. She holds an MFA in Choreography from UCLA's WAC/D and is a current faculty member at MGSA-Rutgers. alexx identifies with her International Jewish Labor Bundist ancestors and their concept of doikayt, or "hereness." Here is where home is, in this body, as it moves. http://www.alexxmakesdances.com.

Dr. Meredith Sims is Associate Professor of Dance and Dance Program Coordinator at Coker

University in Hartsville, South Carolina. She earned a BA in Dance with a concentration in jazz dance from the Conservatory of Performing Arts at Point Park University in Pittsburgh, PA. She earned her MS and PhD in Dance Education through the Department of Kinesiology and Health Promotion at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Sims is a K-12 certified Dance Teacher and served on the writing team for the 2017 SC Visual and Performing Arts Academic Dance Standards. She is the recipient of the 2017 South Carolina Dance Association's Advocacy Award and the 2018 Palmetto State Arts Education's Ray Doughty Arts Integration Award for her continued dedication to dance education access in all of the state.

Dr. Laura Ann Smyth, originally from Canada, is a Los Angeles-based dancer, educator, and choreographer. Smyth holds a BA in Sociology, a Certificate in Journalism, an MFA in Dance, and a PhD in Dance Studies. Smyth currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Dance at Loyola Marymount University. Smyth has performed professionally in Canada and the United States in modern, contemporary, and jazz genres with a variety of concert dance companies in critically acclaimed performances including JazzAntiqua Dance and Music Ensemble at the Playboy Jazz Festival as well as Jacob's Pillow. She has presented on topics such as codification in jazz dance, commercial dance in higher education, and dance and rhetoric at national and international annual dance conferences such as the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), the International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD), and World Dance Alliance (WDA).
Her choreographic work has been presented at post-secondary institutions throughout Southern California and on professional dance companies in Los Angeles, Cleveland, and beyond. Smyth with her colleague Taryn Vander Hoop, co-hosts a podcast titled LMU On Dance: Critical Conversations. She is currently pursuing her Ailey Teacher Certification: Ailey Horton Technique, through the prestigious Ailey School in NYC.

Jennifer Sommers holds an MFA in Dance, Performance and Choreography from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. She has performed with Laura Dean Musicians and Dancers and the Albany Berkshire Ballet, where she also served as Ballet Mistress. Her dance honors include a scholarship to Jacob's Pillow Choreography Workshop, a Durham Arts Council Emerging Artist Grant, and a Lake Region Arts Council grant in support of new work. She was the Associate Director of Raleigh Dance Theater and Founding Dance Educator at KIPP Sharpstown College Prep before joining the Houston Ballet Education & Community Engagement department. She currently serves as Director of the Houston Ballet Academy, overseeing all educational programming.

Danielle Staropoli (M.A., Dance Education, New York University; B.A., Dance, Dean College) teaches early childhood dance at The 92nd Street Y and at The Park Avenue Synagogue in New York City. She is an ABT certified teacher in Pre-primary through Level 3 of the American Ballet Theatre National Training Curriculum. Danielle has been a guest speaker for professional development trainings at the 92NY as well as a guest lecturer at New York University, Steinhardt and at William Paterson University. She founded the dance program at Bay Ridge Preparatory School in 2017, running the program for seven years. She was also the Dance Specialist for Summers at LREI for several years. Danielle is President of the New York State Dance Education Association (NYSDEA),

and formerly President Elect and Director of Conferences. She is an active member of NDEO and has presented at multiple conferences. Danielle has also presented original choreography at Triskelion Arts, Manhattan Movement & Arts Center, Access Theater, 2016 DUMBO Dance Festival, and The National Theatre in Kampala, Uganda.

Kelly Stokes, BA, MA, EdD, is the Community Engagement Coordinator for the Salt Creek Ballet (SCB) in Westmont, IL. As such she coordinates and is the teaching artist for SCB's "Literature through Dance" program as well as provides lecture demonstrations and other dance programs at a variety of community venues. Dr. Stokes' key passion is to research, create, and teach dance education experiences that inspire and motivate children, youth, and adults to both thoughtfully engage in the creative artistic process, and to appreciate the intellectual, physical, and spiritual value that education in and through dance can contribute to their lives. Dr. Stokes is also an adjunct humanities faculty member at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

Sandi Stratton-Gonzalez, MA, is currently a facilitator at the Dance Education Laboratory (DEL), where she writes curriculum for the P-12 dance classroom for students with disabilities. Sandi has also worked with the Arnhold Support Program for Dance Educators since 2019, providing support for early career dance educators and designing professional learning opportunities for NYC Public School's dance educators working with students with disabilities. Sandi has taught Dance for Children with Disabilities (since 2018) for the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) and is a founding member of the NDEO Dance and Disabilities Advisory Committee. For over 20 years (1999-2019), Sandi was the Dance Specialist at The Children's School (PS 372) in Brooklyn, the first fully inclusive public elementary school in the United States. There, she developed a sequential PK -5 curriculum, chaired the Arts Committee, and administered the school's extensive enrichment programs. In addition to teaching at the PS372 inclusion site, Sandi taught at the schools programs for children with Emotional Disabilities and children with Autism. Sandi is co-author (with C. Gallant and D. Duggan) of Dance Education for Diverse Learners: A Special Education Supplement to the Dance Blueprint and has been published in Dance: Current Selected Research Volume 7 and Dance Education in Practice. Sandi taught Dance in Elementary Education at Hofstra University (2008-2018) and has mentored dozens of dance educators as a Cooperating Teacher for Hofstra and New York University. Prior to working in dance education Sandi was the founding Artistic Director and a Resident Choreographer of Soundance Repertory Company (SRC), 1984 – 1999. Under Sandi's direction this groundbreaking community-based arts organization performed throughout the Northeast, implemented cultural partnerships with several of New York's Lower East Side public schools, provided subsidized rehearsal and performance space for the NYC dance community, and stood apart for its commitment to nurturing the voices of emerging and mid-career dance makers. Learn more in her interview with Austin dance educator Silva Laukkanen, Advocating for Inclusive Dance in the Public Schools.

Veneshia W. Stribling is a dance educator and consultant with more than twenty years of experience in public school dance education. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Dance Education and a Master's degree in Divergent Learning

from Columbia College (South Carolina). Throughout her career, she has designed and led comprehensive dance programs, mentored dance educators, and supported schools in developing effective, standards-aligned instruction. Ms. Stribling's work spans elementary, secondary, and collegiate contexts, with a particular focus on culturally responsive pedagogy and increasing access to postsecondary dance opportunities for historically underrepresented students. She has served in district and statewide leadership roles, including as a district lead dance educator, and has been recognized for her contributions to the field through multiple professional awards.
As a consultant, Ms. Stribling specializes in practical, classroom-ready strategies that support teacher sustainability, student engagement, and program growth. Her work emphasizes instructional clarity, cultural integrity, and equitable access to high-quality dance education. Through professional learning, curriculum development, and collaborative partnerships, she is committed to strengthening dance education practices and outcomes for both educators and students.

Dr. Laura Ann Smyth, originally from Canada, is a Los Angeles-based dancer, educator, and choreographer. Smyth holds a BA in Sociology, a Certificate in Journalism, an MFA in Dance, and a PhD in Dance Studies. Smyth currently serves as an Assistant Professor of Dance at Loyola Marymount University. Smyth has performed professionally in Canada and the United States in modern, contemporary, and jazz genres with a variety of concert dance companies in critically acclaimed performances including JazzAntiqua Dance and Music Ensemble at the Playboy Jazz Festival as well as Jacob's Pillow. She has presented on topics such as codification in jazz dance, commercial dance in higher education, and dance and rhetoric at national and international annual dance conferences such as the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO), the International Association of Blacks in Dance (IABD), and World Dance Alliance (WDA). Her choreographic work has been presented at post-secondary institutions throughout Southern California and on professional dance companies in Los Angeles, Cleveland, and beyond. Smyth with her colleague Taryn Vander Hoop, co-hosts a podcast titled LMU On Dance: Critical Conversations. She is currently pursuing her Ailey Teacher Certification: Ailey Horton Technique, through the prestigious Ailey School in NYC.

Elena Sundick is a New York City–based dancer, choreographer, and dance educator. She is a graduate of The Ailey School and holds a Bachelor's degree in Dance and Cognitive/Somatic Studies, summa cum laude, from the CUNY BA program at Hunter College. Elena dedicated much of her undergraduate career advocating and researching mental health in the dance community through a Mellon Public Humanities Scholars Program fellowship. She presented her research at the DANCE/NYC 2022 Symposium and has an article published in Dance Spirit Magazine, "Dance is Therapy—But Dancers Need Better Mental Health Care." Elena works with diverse populations through organizations such as Ailey Arts In Education & Community Programs and Dances For a Variable Population, serving both older adults and children. She also teaches with Marquis Studios, bringing dance education to PreK–12 students throughout NYC public schools including D75 populations. Additionally, Elena is a faculty member at Berest Dance Center in Port Washington, where she teaches Ballet, Horton, and Contemporary dance to

children of all ages. Her choreography has been presented by the Long Island Dance Consortium and the Interim Dance Collective. Elena is currently pursuing her Master's in Dance Education at Hunter College and is excited to continue to share her passion for dance with the world.

T

Natalie Tacuri is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education and Institute for Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies at McGill University. She completed her Honours Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in the Department of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University. Her SSHRC and FRQSC-funded doctoral research is taking a feminist ethnographic approach to examine the sexualization of girls who dance competitively. Natalie's research is inspired by her experience in the competitive dance industry. Natalie grew up dancing at competitive studios in the Greater Toronto Area, in a high school for the arts, and on the Brock Badgers Dance Pak while pursuing her undergraduate degree. She currently teaches and choreographs for competitive dance studios and university dance teams where she has been recognized with top marks and prestigious awards for her choreography. Natalie is passionate about using her love of dance to create meaningful change for dancers within her research.

Ashley L. Tate is an assistant professor of dance at University of North Carolina at Charlotte and artistic director of Ashleyliane Dance Company. She received her MFA in Dance from Washington University in St. Louis, where she was a recipient of the Spencer T & Ann W. Olin Fellowship for Women in Graduate Study. In addition to various cities in the state of Missouri, her choreographic work has been featured in showcases in New York City, Las Vegas, Chicago, Boulder, Santa Monica, and Atlantic City. Her current research interests include the use of dance as a vehicle for community advocacy and collaboration, as well as the visual, auditory, and kinesthetic benefits of hip-hop music and movement. Tate recently became Vice-President of Communications for the North Carolina chapter of NDEO.

Rebecca Taylor is a Germantown, Maryland native and a senior at Towson University. She is majoring in Dance Performance and Choreography with PK–12 Dance Education Certification and plans to graduate in December 2026. She is currently completing her student teaching internship at Chatsworth Elementary School in Reisterstown, Maryland.

Ronald A. Taylor is a Toronto-based dancer, choreographer, and educator with over three decades of experience shaping the Canadian dance landscape. Born in Trinidad and Tobago, he draws deeply from Caribbean folk traditions, blending them with Modern dance and Ballet to create his signature technique; Dingolay, a universal, Canadian-rooted form designed for diverse dancers on the international stage. Throughout his career, Ronald has performed with leading companies and collaborated with acclaimed choreographers, bringing a distinct voice that fuses cultural heritage with a contemporary expression. He has presented his work at national and international festivals, workshops, and conferences, earning recognition for his innovative approach to movement, rhythm, and storytelling.
As an educator, Ronald is committed to cultivating inclusive, culturally responsive

learning environments. He trains dancers of all ages and abilities, emphasizing musicality, expressive freedom, and the integration of diasporic knowledge into contemporary practice. His teaching is informed by decades of performance experience, mentorship, and a belief that dance can serve as both a technical discipline and a vessel for personal and cultural expression. Ronald's work continues to inspire a new generation of dancers and educators, offering a dynamic, joyful, and globally informed perspective on movement and choreography.

Marina Thompson is a 17-year public school dance educator with Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) in Maryland, founder and director of the Southern Middle School Dance program, and current Health, Physical Education, and Dance Department Chair. She served as the AACPS Middle School Ensemble Director for five years, choreographs for her own program as well as guest choreography, and her work has been selected for county and state-level galas. Since 2009, she has built a thriving, inclusive dance community that emphasizes student growth, collaboration, and excellence. Marina believes dance is her vessel to impact students and the community, inspiring personal growth, connection, and engagement. She holds dual Bachelor of Science degrees in Pre-K–12 Health and Physical Education and Pre-K–12 Dance Education from Radford University, and a Master of Education in School Counseling from Liberty University. A National Board Certified Teacher, she has earned numerous honors, including 2024 Maryland Dance Education Association Dance Teacher of the Year (K–12), AACPS Excellence in Education honoree (2015 & 2020), 2015 Shape Maryland Simon McNeely Award recipient, and AACPS Teacher of the Month (May 2024). She serves as the AACPS Dance Festival Manager, AACPS Summer Dance Intensive Director, and AACPS New Dance Teacher Mentor, inspiring the next generation of dancers as well as public school dance educators.

Mark Tomasic is Chair of the Dance Department of Santa Monica College. At SMC, he has been awarded recognition as "Equity Champion" and "Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year" (2018-19). Throughout his professional career of over 20 years Mark performed principal and featured roles in the masterworks of such notable choreographers as Martha Graham, Donald McKayle, Paul Taylor, David Parsons, Sean Curran, May O'Donnell, George Balanchine, Antony Tudor, Flemming Flindt, Talley Beatty, and Agnes de Mille. As a choreographer, Mark has created works for numerous dance companies, colleges, and universities across the country. Mark has worked extensively in the field of physically integrated dance with the Dancing Wheels Company & School, one of the premier arts and disability organizations in the United States. Serving as Artistic Advisor to the Company, Mark travels nationally and internationally to teach physically integrated dance to students and professionals alike and is the author of the inclusive dance training manual, "Physically Integrated Dance: The Dancing Wheels Comprehensive Guide for Teachers, Choreographers and Students of Mixed Abilities." Mark holds an AA from Cuyahoga Community College, a BFA in Ballet from the University of Cincinnati, and an MFA in Dance from the University of California, Irvine.

Eto'o Tsana is a New York City-based performing artist, choreographer, dance educator, researcher, and youth development specialist with extensive experience in K-12

nonprofit arts education and higher education. She has served as Community School Director and Performing Arts Coordinator and has taught Afro-Diasporic dance forms within the CUNY system and public and private schools throughout New York and beyond. As Artistic Director of Mabina Danseuses Dance Company, founded in 2011, she focuses on cultural performance and humanitarianism through Kongolese dance and cultural perspectives. Her professional practice is grounded in rigorous academic training. Eto'o graduated Magna Cum Laude from Hunter College with an MFA in Dance and Summa Cum Laude from Queens College with a Bachelor's degree in Drama, Theater, and Dance. She is currently pursuing an Ed.D. in Dance Education with an Interdisciplinary Specialization at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research interests include the private cultural arts sector, Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies, and Black Women's Ways of Knowing in dance education, explored through sociocultural theories, justice, and equity.

Gabrielle A. Tull is an assistant professor of dance and coordinator for dance education at Winthrop University. She is a 2020 MFA dance graduate from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. As a previous high school dance director and curriculum curator, she received a Masters in Education in Divergent Learning at Columbia College, SC. Artistically, she has performed and collaborated with professional companies and artists including BJ Sullivan, Janet Lilly, Brian Sanders, City Modern Ensemble, The Power Company, and Terrance Henderson Dance Inc. Her recent scholarship in the Afro Diaspora foundations in jazz technique and performance was awarded a VA Artist Express Grant; including a lead presentation at the Collegium for African Diaspora Dance Conference at Duke in 2022.

Vonntanice Turner is Chair of the Performing Arts Department and Director of Dance at McKinley Classical Leadership Academy in St. Louis Public Schools, where she teaches middle and high school dance and contributes to the design of a growing secondary performing arts pathway. She has taught dance across PreK–12 settings in multiple regions of the United States and was nominated for Teacher of the Year in visual and performing arts for her leadership, program development, and student-centered approach to arts education. Vaughn holds a Master’s degree in Dance from American University in Washington, D.C. Her work is shaped by a liberal arts perspective that blends reflective practice, student agency, and sustainable program design. She is particularly interested in how dance education can support identity development, creative leadership, and long-term engagement with the arts within public school settings.

V

Luc Vanier is a Professor in the School of Dance at the University of Utah and a certified teacher of the Alexander Technique. His work bridges somatic education, developmental movement theory, and emerging technologies in dance pedagogy. He is a co-creator of the Framework for Integration (F4I), a developmental movement analysis system that supports coordination, agency, and psychophysical clarity in dancers and educators across diverse contexts. In recent years, Vanier has expanded this work into AI-assisted movement analysis, developing a prototype that translates somatic

principles into visual pattern feedback using accessible technology. His research explores how computational tools can function as reflective partners rather than evaluative authorities, empowering students to recognize movement patterns and make informed decisions about their learning. Vanier has presented nationally and internationally on somatics, dance pedagogy, and embodied learning. His work advocates for rigorous yet inclusive teaching practices that integrate perception, technology, and student agency in contemporary dance education.

Erika Vasquez is one of the dance directors at Classen School of Advanced Studies at Northeast. Classen SAS at Northeast is currently ranked as the #1 public school in Oklahoma, focusing on both the International Baccalaureate and Visual and Performing Arts. Erika has served the Oklahoma City Public Schools since 2011. She currently serves on the Oklahoma Arts Institute advisory board. Erika is co-founder of the Calderon Dance Festival held in Oklahoma City. Erika enjoys her work with flamenco and sharing the dance form with multiple schools, festivals, and offering workshops around Oklahoma. Erika Vasquez is a flamenco dancer and educator born and raised in Oklahoma City. She began her flamenco training at the age of eight under the mentorship of Shannon Calderon Primeau and has since worked with artists from the renowned Yjastros Flamenco Repertory Company. Erika has enriched her practice by taking master classes with flamenco artists from around the world at the Festival Flamenco Albuquerque in New Mexico for the past ten years. She currently serves as one of the dance department directors at Classen School of Advanced Studies at Northeast, where she teaches a flamenco course as part of the school's innovative dance curriculum.

Rebecca (Becky) Visintainer graduated from Rutgers University with a BFA in Dance Performance and a Master's in Dance Education (PreK–12). During her studies, she completed a year-abroad program at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London, England. As a performer, she has collaborated with acclaimed choreographers both domestically and internationally, including Keith Thompson, John Evans, Lizzie Kew-Ross, Valerie Dunlop, Kim Gibilisco, and Sumi Clements, among others. She is currently a company member of Rock Dance Collective, a New Jersey-based dance company under the artistic direction of Cleo Mack. Becky has taught throughout New Jersey in a range of settings, including dance studios, intensives, collegiate masterclasses, and public schools. For the past nine years, she has directed the middle and high school dance programs in the North Plainfield School District, where she has developed a holistic curriculum aligned with state and national standards and supports students in developing both technical proficiency and creative expression.Becky is certified in the American Ballet Theatre's National Training Curriculum (Pre-Primary through Level 3) and is a 500-hour Registered Yoga Teacher and Continuing Education Provider. She also holds certifications in Yin Yoga and Ayurvedic Yoga. Becky remains deeply engaged in the broader dance education community. She has served as a part-time lecturer at Rutgers Graduate School of Education, where she taught courses on interdisciplinary and social justice pedagogy within the Dance Education Program. She has authored interdisciplinary dance and theatre curricula for the New Jersey Performing Arts Center's school-time performance programs,

acted as an adjudicator for the National Honor Society for Dance Arts Scholarship, and served as a mentor for the National Dance Education Organization's New-Teacher Mentorship Program.Currently, she serves on the National Connected Arts Network (CAN), a federal grant initiative focused on promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and social-emotional learning in arts education. In this role, she leads monthly professional learning communities with educators from across the country.

W

Amber T. Wade brings over two decades of diverse experience in dance education, spanning K-12 public and charter schools, higher education, and private studio settings. Amber began her dance training at the University of Utah's Virginia Tanner Dance and Children's Dance Theater. She earned a B.S. in Dance Education with a minor in History from Utah State University and an M.A. in Dance Education from California State University, Long Beach. She is also certified in Progressing Ballet Technique (PBT). Amber's teaching career began at Skyline High School in the Granite School District before she was asked to develop a dance program at Eisenhower Junior High, where the program she established continues to thrive. Following her graduate studies, she joined the adjunct faculty at Utah Valley University, teaching Dance Production, Improvisation, Composition, Dance Conditioning, Secondary Dance Education, and co-directing the Senior Capstone class. She later expanded her teaching to private studio settings, instructing students of all ages and levels in ballet, movement, and PBT at multiple competitive dance studios. Amber has returned to her passion for teaching dance in an educational setting as the founder of the dance program at Providence Hall Junior High, a charter school in Herriman, Utah, where she ensures dance is accessible to all students. Currently, she also serves as President of the Utah Dance Education Organization, where she advocates for quality dance education throughout the state.

Samantha Walker is a dance educator, performer, and emerging researcher currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in Dance at the University of Tampa, with a minor in Entrepreneurship. Samantha was a 2025 Summer Undergraduate Research Fellow at the University of Tampa, where she conducted research on peer mentorship and inclusive dance practices for students with disabilities. Her work examines accessibility, equity, inclusive teaching methods, and community-centered dance education, and she is committed to developing programs that expand opportunities for all dancers.

Mr. Dominquie Walters is a dedicated dance educator, choreographer, and researcher with seven years of teaching experience, including six years at the middle school level and currently serving as the dance director at Ridge View High School in Columbia, South Carolina. He holds a B.F.A. in Dance from Valdosta State University and a Master of Arts in Dance Education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. His graduate thesis investigates Majorette and J-Sette dance through the lenses of cultural responsiveness, feminist pedagogy, and curriculum development, with a focus on integrating Black dance forms into formal education settings. Walters' research includes semi-structured interviews with dancers and educators, content analysis of Majorette and

J-Sette performances, and the examination of community traditions through history, media, and lived experience. His work advocates for representation, inclusion, and student-centered learning within dance programs, challenging Eurocentric norms and expanding access to culturally relevant curriculum. Beyond the classroom, Walters actively creates dance-centered content on social media and continues to explore ways to merge scholarship, creativity, and community engagement. He is passionate about empowering dancers to move with agency and pride, and supporting fellow educators in teaching Majorette with cultural integrity and joy.

Camille Weanquoi is a freelance, interdisciplinary dance artist, cultural worker, and Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator of Dance at Coppin State University. She holds a B.A. in Dance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, a B.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies from Winston-Salem State University, and an M.F.A. in Choreography from Wilson College. Camille is the founder of Camille W. Dance, a culturally immersive consulting firm and performance company, the Executive Director and co-founder of the Baltimore Black Dance Collective, and co-founder/co-director of the Baltimore Black Choreographers Festival. Her work centers on African diasporic dance traditions and liberatory pedagogy. Additionally, she is a Dunham Technique-Certified Teacher. She is passionate about using dance to build community, honor ancestral memory, and empower the next generation of artists. Beyond her professional accolades, Camille is a devoted wife, mother, daughter, sister, friend, and unwavering advocate for the arts.

Laina Reese Werner-Powell, MFA is a performing artist, choreographer, writer, and Associate Professor of dance. Laina received her MFA in Dance Performance & Pedagogy and Certificate of Study in Feminist Methodologies & Sexualities from Arizona State University; and her BFA in Dance from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Laina brings a myriad of experiences with her from a rigorous professional performance career in both commercial and concert dance— including intensive study and performance with institutions and companies such as Ailey Extension, A.I.M. by Kyle Abraham, Joel Hall Dancers & Center, MGM Performance Group, Las Vegas Talent Agency, and more. Currently Associate Professor of Dance at Illinois State University and PhD student in Leadership, Equity, and Inquiry, Laina specializes in the teaching, choreography, and curricular advancement of contemporary Modern, Jazz, and African American vernacular dance(s). As a scholar-practitioner, Laina's research methodologies and theory-based practices are centered around dance history, decolonization, popular culture, and Intersectionality.

Amy West is an Assistant Professor of Dance and Health & Wellness Coach at the University of Michigan's School of Music, Theatre & Dance, following a 24-year professional dance career. She is certified by the Mayo Clinic and the National Board of Health & Wellness Coaches and also holds certifications in Personal Training and Health Coaching through the American Council on Exercise (ACE), as well as Pilates, Essentrics, and Progressing Ballet Technique (PBT). She offers personalized coaching and wellness workshops for musicians, elite athletes, and everyday movers through amywestwellness.com. She choreographed musical theatre productions of Oklahoma! and

Annie, and presented at both the International Association for Dance Medicine and Science (IADMS) and the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) conferences. In May 2024, she curated and produced the concert Women Defining Themselves, a fundraiser for ALS research at Michigan Medicine.

Lela Bell Wesley has been a valued member of the Big Thought community for many years serving in many roles including Teaching Artist, Instructional Partner and Professional Development Manager, among others. Lela's professional experience spans the spectrum, both in-school and out-of-school, including Montessori schools, traditional public education and higher education. Lela has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Master of Science in Counseling, her Teaching Certificate (EC-12 Physical Education, 6-12 Dance), and her Principal Certification. In the professional dance community, Lela has worked as a professional dancer and choreographer. In addition to being with Beckles Dancing Company for over twenty-five years with hundreds of performances, Lela has also appeared in operas, film, and commercials. As Sr Director of Big Thought Institute, Lela is responsible for leading the strategy and implementation of all components of Big Thought's adult training and coaching for staff in Big Thought Direct-to-Youth Programs, for partner agencies in Big Thought Learning Systems, and for clients of Big Thought Institute. This position ensures that there is high-quality professional learning infrastructure and content to properly support the continual growth of adults who are working to fulfill this vision, in both in-person training and distance learning.

Tiffany White is currently the Dance Director at Chandler High School, Past President of Arizona Dance Education Organization (AzDEO) and the Southwest Representative on the NDEO Board of Directors. She has been teaching Dance in public schools for 13 years. She has a BFA in Dance & Choreography and a BS in Creative Advertising from Virginia Commonwealth University, a MEd in Secondary Education from the University of Arizona, & a MEd in Counseling from Prescott College. Tiffany has served on various state committees to revise the Dance standards, create Baseline/Summative Assessments and pilot the National Dance Standards. She has spoken at multiple events around the state of AZ such as the ASA State Conference, Title IV-A Conference, AZ Arts Congress, AzDEO professional development events, and at the National Dance Education Conference. In 2019, Tiffany was the recipient of the 'Kathy Lindholm Lane' AZ Dance Educator of the Year award.

Sarah Wilbur (she/her) is an artist-educator-scholar who champions arts labor and laborers in all facets of her professional work. As a dance facilitator, she has worked across a wide array of industries and contexts, including 25+ years staging participatory dance and movement in educational, aging, and health care settings. Her first book, Funding Bodies: Five Decades of Dance Making at the National Endowment for the Arts (2021), analyzed the impact of U.S. federal funding policy on dance labor and organization. Her current book project, Prescribing Dance, offers an economic and ethnographic account of post COVID arts labor shaped by the U.S. health industry. As Associate Professor of the Practice at Duke University, Sarah is jointly appointed in Dance and Theater Studies and allied faculty with Re-Imagining Medicine. She co-edits the Arts in Context: Critical Performance Infrastructures book series

(University of Texas Press) and co-facilitates the NEH-funded Equitable Arts Infrastructures Research Group.

Sierra Wilkerson is a dancer in the Professional Training Division and on the Teaching Faculty of Cincinnati Ballet. Sierra studied Ballet on scholarship at Pacific Northwest Ballet School and Professional Division (Seattle, WA), Cincinnati Ballet (Cincinnati, OH), and Alonso King LINES Ballet (San Francisco, CA). She has performed alongside these professional companies in various famous ballets such as, George Balanchine's The Nutcracker, Square Dance, and Concerto Barocco, Kent Stowell's Swan Lake, Bruce Wells' Snow White, Beauty and the Beast, and Pinocchio, and Devon Carney's Giselle. She began her teaching journey as a Student Teachers Assistant for the Pacific Northwest Ballet School, and as the Lead Teacher's Assistant for their Community Outreach Program, DanceChance, receiving direct teaching mentorship from the Head Faculty of the School. Sierra joined the Teaching Faculty of Cincinnati Ballet in 2024 where she continues to be mentored by Resident Faculty. As an educator, Sierra is deeply committed to fostering a supportive, disciplined, and inclusive learning environment. She believes effective dance training balances technical excellence with compassion, body awareness, and emotional intelligence. Her teaching approach prioritizes clear communication, thoughtful progression, and respect for the physical and mental demands of dance.

Mary Virginia ("Ginny") Wilmerding, PhD, danced professionally in New York City with the Solomons Company/Dance, Musawwir Gymnastic Dance Company, under the artistic direction of Toby Towson, and Richard Walker and Dancers. She is now a Research Professor at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA in both the Exercise Science Program and the Dance Program. Research publications encompass body composition, training methodologies, injury incidence and prevention, pedagogical considerations in technique class, and the physiological requirements of various dance idioms. Ginny is Past President of the International Association for Dance Medicine & Science (IADMS) and former Chief Executive Officer (CEO). With Donna Krasnow, PhD, she has co-authored the Human Kinetics textbook Motor Learning and Control for Dance: Principles and Practices for Performers and Teachers, and they collaborated to edit the IADMS organizational book Dancer Wellness. Ginny serves in an executive position for the New Mexico Ballet Company.

Tamara Williams (Associate Professor), BFA (FSU) and MFA (Hollins University/ADF/ Frankfurt), is a choreographer, scholar, artivist, and founder of Moving Spirits, Inc. Her work has been performed internationally in Brazil, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Benin, Switzerland and Serbia. She is the author of Giving Life to Movement: The Silvestre Dance Technique and author/editor of the forthcoming book, The African Diaspora and Civic Responsibility through publisher McFarland and Co. Other publications included articles in The Dancer-Citizen and Jonkonnu Arts Journal. Williams has received grants and residencies from Harlem Stage, Brooklyn Arts Council, Kaatsbaan, Mecklenburg County Arts and Sciences Council, Partners for Change, and The National Center for Choreography-NCCAkron. Williams is the co-creator for Charlotte's annual African Brazilian and Indigenous LAVAGEM Celebration. She is also the creator of the biannual International African Diaspora Dance Traditions Conference in Bahia, Brazil and co-creator of the International Benin Dance

Exchange in Cotonou, Benin. Williams serves on the Executive Board of Dance/USA and advises the National Dance Project. She is a 2026 Dance USA Fellow and Gambrell Research Fellow.

Alaina Wilson is a Doctoral Student in Dance Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Her research investigates dance techniques as an embodied practice, exploring how dancers understand and generate knowledge through sustained engagement with dance forms. Using qualitative approaches, her work examines technique not as a fixed system, but as a lived process shaped through practice, experience, and context. Currently, Wilson serves as Chief of Staff and Director of Individual Advancement with Gibney, a non-profit dance organization in New York City. Wilson previously served as Company Manager with Jonah Bokaer Arts Foundation and held management positions with BodyStories: Teresa Fellion Dance. She has held dance teaching positions with Morningside DanceWorX, the Ailey School Junior Division, Bronxville Ballet, the Bronxville Adult School, the Eliza Corwin Frost Child Center, and has been a Visiting Artist with Randolph College. Wilson has been awarded choreographic residencies with Chez Bushwick and the Catwalk Institute. Since 2014, Wilson has created and produced over 20 original works of dance as well as four choreographic works on film.

Eve Wolff has proudly served as Dancing Classrooms' Executive Director since the fall of 2024. She joined DC as Deputy Director in February 2020, spearheading the transformation of programming in response to the pandemic. She led the creation of Dancing Classrooms: Homeroom Edition, a virtual/hybrid model that ensured thousands of students continued to experience the joy, connection, and social-emotional benefits of dance during a time of isolation. Eve also oversaw the expansion of programs to include after-school, summer, and K–3 offerings, while cultivating strategic partnerships that strengthened organizational sustainability and reach.
Prior to Dancing Classrooms, Eve served as Senior Project Director at Advance Collaborative, a leading strategy and fundraising consultancy, supporting arts and education clients. Eve's career spans decades in the NYC performing and arts education sectors, including serving as Director of Programming at Young Audiences NY. She recently completed her second term on the Board of Directors of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable. Eve holds a BFA in Drama from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and an Executive Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership & Management from Baruch College. A lifelong dancer and performer, she remains deeply committed to expanding equitable access to arts education for all young people.

Ms. Cynthia Word has a Bachelor of Science from the University of Texas/Austin. She continued her professional Modern Dance training, with in-depth experience in the technique and choreography of Doris Humphrey and Jose Limon, at the University of Illinois/Champaign-Urbana. In 1992 she received her Master in Fine Arts from The George Washington University/Department of Theater and Dance, where she served on the teaching faculty. From 1990 to 2004, Word travelled in the United States and Europe as a teaching artist for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts/Washington D.C. and the Wolf Trap Center for the Arts/Fairfax, Va. In 2000 Word founded Word Dance Theater, continuing to explore her interest in blending original theater, live music, and dance. In 2000, Word

met Dr. Jeanne Bresciani, Director of the Isadora Duncan International Institute, New York City. Word immediately began intense private study with Bresciani in the art and technique of Isadora Duncan. Word performs Duncan masterworks for Word Dance Theater and with the Isadora Duncan International Institute in the US and Europe. Word continues her teaching career via weekly technique classes, masterclasses, and residencies. Word Dance Theater's home is Washington D.C. where they create and present award-winning performances.

Y

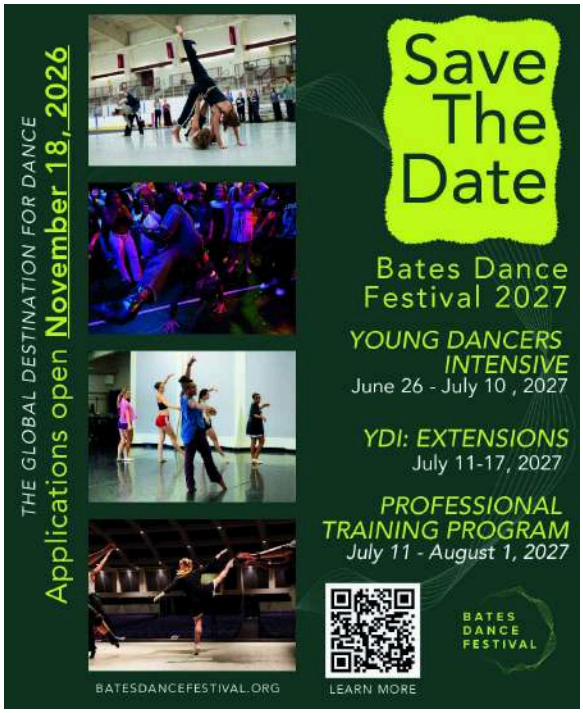
Boram Yi is a South Korean artist-educator and a PhD candidate in Dance at Temple University, where she has served as a Teaching Assistant. She holds an MA in Dance Education from Hunter College. Her research explores the lived experiences of Korean diasporic people through community-based dance, return migration, cultural memory, and embodied belonging. Her teaching spans higher education and community settings in the U.S. and South Korea, and centers on accessible, relationship-based approaches to movement learning. She is especially interested in how circle-based movement structures can support collaboration, self-expression, and a sense of belonging among participants with varied movement backgrounds. Across her academic and community work, she emphasizes inclusive facilitation, creative exploration, and embodied reflection as pathways for meaning-making and connection.

Z

Dr. Dawn Zinga is a Professor of Child and Youth Studies at Brock University. Her SSHRC funded research has focused on adolescent dancers in studio and competitive contexts. Dr. Zinga is particularly interested in how adolescent dancers are motivated to dance, their health and well-being, the impacts of competition, perfectionism and perfectionistic climates. She has held several SSHRC grants focused on dancers and their training contexts, the most recent grant examining dance movement using motion capture and Artificial Intelligence technologies.




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NDEO acknowledges the extraordinary individuals who have made vital contributions to the dance education field!

Special thanks to the 2026 Awards Committee: Yauri Dalencour, Committee Chair; Committee members, Anthony Alterio, Amy Barth, Paramita Bhattacharyya, Tosha Brown, Ariel Charles-Adams, Austin Childers, Adia Edmondson, Mary Fitzgerald, Ananya Goswami, Ebone Harden, Suzanne Hennerman, Traci Klein, Rachel McCaulsky, Raphael Miller, Jennifer Salter, Kieron Sargeant, Frankie Soldevere Brandt, Caitlin Trainor Kaye Witting, Genevieve Woodward, and Stefan Zubal.

All photos and biographies are courtesy of award recipients or their nominator.

Lifetime Achievement (Living Artist/Educator)



Dr. Dale Schmid's career spans artistic practice, teaching, research, assessment, public policy, and national leadership. A former professional dancer and teaching artist, he trained with and performed under influential modern dance artists including Nancy Hauser, Hanya Holm, Isa Bergsohn, Erick Hawkins, Peter Sparling, Billy Sigenfeldt, and Bill Evans, among others. Before entering education full time, he toured nationally for 17 years, performing in 36 states. Schmid currently serves as Associate Adjunct Professor in the Ed.D. Dance Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University, and as a Research Fellow with the Arnhold Institute for Dance Education Research, Policy & Leadership. Previously, he spent over two decades as Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator for the New Jersey Department of Education, overseeing arts education policy and practice affecting 1.4 million students. His statewide leadership encompassed standards development, assessment, teacher licensure, arts integration, career and technical education, research, and program evaluation. Nationally, Schmid has served as President of both the National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) and the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE), and in leadership roles with the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. He contributed to the 2015 National Core Arts Standards, NDEO's Standards for Learning and Teaching Dance in the Arts and Professional Teaching Standards for Dance in Arts Education, and the K–12 Model Program Standards: Opportunities to Learn in Dance Arts Education. His newest work, "Assessment as a Pedagogical Tool and Research Method for Programmatic Evaluation," appears in the Intellect Handbook of Dance Education Research. A nationally recognized authority on arts assessment, Schmid led the development, psychometric validation, and national implementation of NDEO's Dance Entry Level Teacher Assessment (DELTA), supported by successive National Endowment for the Arts grants. His scholarship advances authentic and formative assessment as tools for student learning, teacher development, and systemic improvement.
His honors include NDEO's Outstanding Leadership Award and Presidential Service Award, multiple New Jersey Governor's Arts Awards, and the 2021 Governor's Arts Award for Outstanding Lifetime Contribution to Arts Education. Across more than four decades, his work remains grounded in expanding access to rigorous, equitable, and artistically meaningful dance and arts education.

Lifetime Achievement (Living Artist/Educator)



Terrie Ajile Axam is an internationally recognized dancer, choreographer, educator, vocalist, cultural arts leader, and Founder and Artistic Director of Dancical Productions. A pioneer in Georgia arts education, she became the first person in the state to receive Teacher Certification in Dance. She helped establish dance education programs throughout Fulton County Schools, including serving as the founding dance coordinator for the Tri-Cities Magnet Arts Program. Dedicated to celebrating African American culture and the transformative power of the arts, Dancical Productions has served communities locally, nationally, and internationally. The organization has partnered with schools, universities, municipalities, and cultural institutions to expand access to arts education, particularly for diverse and underserved communities. Its work has reached international audiences through cultural exchanges in China, Senegal, Brazil, and Jamaica. Signature productions include Women Hold Up Half the Sky, recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, and Fusion: From Africa to Hip Hop. Ms. Axam created the renowned Mojah Dance Technique in 1971, an innovative artistic methodology that gained national attention and was featured on CNN. Her teaching,

performances, lectures, and residencies have taken her throughout the United States and abroad, including Princeton University, Pennsylvania State University, Rutgers University, Brenau University, Edna Manley College in Jamaica, and the Federal University of Viçosa in Brazil. Her distinguished career includes collaborations with Arrested Development, Peabo Bryson, Avery Brooks, and Alex Haley's presentation of Roots. Her numerous honors include recognition from the NAACP, the Atlanta Trailblazer Award, Kuumba Tribute Award, Elephant Leadership Award, and official proclamations honoring her contributions. Founded in 1983 by Terrie "Ajile" Axam, Total Dance/Dancical Productions, Inc. is one of Atlanta's longest-serving nonprofit cultural arts organizations. For more than four decades, the organization has enriched thousands of youth, families, educators, and communities through dance education, cultural arts programming, leadership development, and professional performances. Today, Ms. Axam continues her lifelong mission of developing great artists, great leaders, and stronger communities through the transformative power of the arts.

Lifetime Achievement (Living Artist/Educator)



Deborah Jowitt was born in 1934 and began dancing professionally at the age of nineteen. She performed with such luminaries as Mary Anthony, Doris Humphrey, José Limon and Anna Sokolow. She presented her own work through Dance Theater Workshop (they awarded her a "Bessie" in 1985). She had a regular column in The Village Voice (1967-2011) and her writing also appeared in The New York Times, Dance Magazine, Ballet Review, and Dance Research Journal. She wrote Errand into the Maze: The Life and Works of Martha Graham, Jerome Robbins: His Life, His Theater, His Dance, and Time and the Dancing Image, and she contributed essays to numerous publications, as well.

Lifetime Achievement (Living Artist/Educator)



Dr. Joan Finkelstein (EdD Dance Education Leadership & Policy: Teachers College, Columbia University; MFA Choreography, BFA Performance: NYU Tisch) is executive director of the Harkness Foundation for Dance (2014-present). Since 1985 the Foundation has contributed close to $40M to almost 700 dance artists, companies, presenters, service organizations, and dance education programs. Joan has performed with the Cliff Keuter and Don Redlich modern dance companies, the Jean Léon Destiné Afro-Haitian Dance company, and in RAGS on Broadway; choreographed for modern and ballet companies; and taught children and adults nationwide. As director of 92Y Harkness Dance Center (1992-2004) she supervised classes for children and adults, the Dance Education Laboratory (DEL) of which she was founding director, student performances, an annual five-week festival of professional dance company performances which she curated, a workshop series for professional dancers, a space grant program, the Breaking Ground dance lecture series with moderator Deboarh Jowitt, and weekly social dances for the general public. While Dance Director at the NYCDoE (2004-2014), she spearheaded the creation of the NYC Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Dance, PreK-12 dance standards, supervised citywide dance assessments, and led 75 dance teacher professional development workshops. She was on the writing committees for the National Core Arts Standards-Dance (2014) and the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts-Dance (2017). Joan has served on boards and advisory boards for Dance/USA, International Committee for the Dance Library of Israel (ICDLI), Dance/NYC, Dance Teacher Magazine, Martha Hill Dance Fund (MHDF), EFSD, NYFA. Honors & Awards: 1987 NEA and 1982 NARB Choreographer Fellowships; ICDLI

(2003: Hall of Fame), BAX (2007: Educator of the Year); Rutgers Univ. Dance Ed. Master's Program (2009); NDEO (2009: Leadership), La Mama Moves! (2011); Marymount Manhattan College Dance Dept. (2012); Mary Seidman & Dancers (2012); Chen and Dancers (2013); NYSDEA (2014: Outstanding Leadership), Teachers College (2023: Doctoral Researcher Award); White Wave Dance (2024); Martha Hill Dance Find (2026: Lifetime Achievement). Joan was a BESSIES Committee member for 16 years and since 2025 serves on the selection committee for the Dance Magazine Awards.

Lifetime Achievement (Living Artist/Educator)



Nancy Romita has been teaching, performing, choreographing, writing, and community building for 50 years. Nancy's college majors in dance, child development, and education led her first to teach dance K–8th grade at Pine Point School and as a Eugene O'Neill Artist-in-Schools in Connecticut. Romita found an artistic and teaching home at the 92nd St Y and SUNY during her 9 years performing in NYC. Additionally, she has taught at the American Dance Festival, SUNY Purchase, Connecticut College, UMBC, and currently Towson University (1985–present). Romita's 50 choreographic works have been performed nationally and internationally. Foundational training from Martha Myers, work with Stuart Pimsler, and Alexander Technique teacher training shaped Nancy's creative work to integrate somatic/wellness and community-building practices into choreography and teaching. Romita premiered her first full-length dance concert at the 92nd St Y in 1982, was artistic director of The Moving Company from 1993–2002, and is a 3-time recipient of the Maryland State Excellence in Choreography Award. A focus in her artistic work is developing site-specific performances with community partners (ex. Young Audiences of Maryland, Foundation Fighting Blindness, Center for Poverty Solutions, & Baltimore Museum of Art). In 2000, Romita partnered with Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center to choreograph a performance and design/build a contemplative labyrinth. This labyrinth (wheelchair accessible) provides a space for performances and a place for patients, visitors, staff, and community members to move, reflect, and heal, integrating the arts into a traditional health care setting. Nancy's community work includes service on the boards of MSAC, Maryland Dance Education Association, and International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association. Currently, Nancy is co-founder, with Allegra Romita, of Functional Awareness®, a somatic approach to embodied anatomy and motor learning to improve dance skill. She has presented their research at the International Alexander Technique Congress, National Dance Education Organization, and International Association for Dance Medicine and Science. Nancy is co-author of *Functional Awareness: Anatomy in Action for Dancers* and *Functional Awareness and Yoga: An Anatomical Guide to the Body in Reflective Practice*, published by Oxford University Press.

Lifetime Achievement (Living Artist/Educator)



Julie Kerr-Berry is a Professor Emerita of Dance at Minnesota State University, Mankato, USA. For over three decades, she directed the Dance Program and later chaired her Department of Theatre & Dance. Julie created and administered the K-12 Dance Education license for several years, placing many students in Twin Cities public schools. Understanding the necessity to develop other career paths for dance students, she designed two additional tracks: private studio teaching and pre-professional dance/movement therapy. Julie received the university's prestigious

Distinguished Faculty Scholar Award for her published and creative research, and leadership. At the national level, Julie is Editor Emerita of the "Journal of Dance Education"; her editorship began during the journal's fledgling years. Julie's scholarly publications focus on the intersections of dance, cultural history, race, and whiteness. Such endeavors led to Julie's 2026 book, "Bearing Witness to Whiteness in American Dance: Dancing Bodies Out-of-Place" published by Palgrave. Her years teaching dance history at the university level informed the pedagogic thread weaving throughout her book. She has received awards from the National Dance Education Organization for her scholarship, leadership, and work grounded in social justice centered in racial equity and anti-racist literacy. Julie's creative research has been featured in the American College Dance Association's Gala Concerts, most notably, her work, "War Story" (2014), which was selected as the Second Alternative for the Kennedy Center's National Dance Festival. Teaching is her life's work–expanding beyond academia to Ibadan, Nigeria where she taught and danced with youth at a community center; later, to a federal women's prison where she taught an introduction to dance course; and, most recently, to a sacred setting where she taught yoga to church elders. Internationally, Julie was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study dance in Indonesia spending five weeks with other artists from varied disciplines. Such travel led to developing international dance study for her students by co-leading trips to Paris, France where they danced and performed. Her dance training/experience is a fusion of Limón, German Expressionism (Mary Wigman-based), and Umfundalai (African diasporic-based) traditions. Julie holds advanced degrees from Temple University's Department of Dance in Philadelphia, PA.

Lifetime Achievement (Posthumous)



Lucinda Lavelli grew up in the Cleveland, OH, area, and attended Denison University in Granville, OH. After graduating from Denison, Lucinda headed to Case Western Reserve University, where she earned both a Master's degree in Nonprofit Management and a Masters of Fine Arts. In the first of many leadership positions throughout her career, she became Chairwoman of Performing Arts, and Director of Dance, at Hathaway Brown School in Akron, OH. She then left in 1993 to become the Director of the School of Dance, Theatre and Arts Administration, at the University of Akron. Ms. Lavelli was then named the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Arts and Academics at North Carolina School for the Arts in Winston-Salem. In 2006, Lavelli became the third dean in the College of the Art's 50-year history as an independent college at the University of Florida. During her tenure, she launched the BA Dance degree, grew the faculty from six full-time to nine plus an accompanist, and nearly quadrupled enrollment in dance. In addition to her countless other accomplishments during her tenure as Dean, Lucinda laid the foundations for $60 million dollars that the state of Florida committed to the building of a piano studio. Ms. Lavelli retired in 2018. She became ill and sadly passed away in November, 2025, at the age of 75. Quote from Jerry Dicky, Professor Emeritus and Past Director, University of Florida College of the Arts: Lucinda's achievements in arts integration at the University of Florida changed the face of our College. On a campus that historically had risen to prominence in the sciences, her efforts to seek out partners from other disciplines were not always met with eager acceptance. She once said, "If you extend your hand in friendship, somebody's got to be at the other end to shake it." Throughout her 12-year tenure as dean, Lavelli coupled her attributes as a determined, strategic and thoughtful administrator with unwavering advocacy for the arts, both at the University of Florida and on the national stage, earning her the moniker "Wonder Woman of the Arts."

Lifetime Achievement (Posthumous)

Choreographer and dancer **Carmen De Lavallade** was born on March 6, 1931, to Grace Grenot and Leo Paul De Lavallade in Los Angeles, California. There, her aunt, Adele De Lavallade, owned the Hugh Gordon Book Shop, one of the first African American history bookshops on Central Avenue. Her cousin, Janet Collins, was the first African American prima ballerina at the Metropolitan Opera in New York City. De Lavallade discovered her talent for dance early. In 1945, she began studying ballet with Melissa Blake, and at the age of sixteen, upon graduation from Thomas Jefferson High School, she was awarded a scholarship to study dance with the renowned Lester Horton. In 1949, De Lavallade became a member of the celebrated Lester Horton Dance Theater, where from 1950 to 1954, she enjoyed the status of lead dancer. During this time, De Lavallade continued to study dance, becoming proficient in ballet and other forms of modern and ethnic dance. Lester Horton insisted that she study other art forms, including painting, acting, music, set design and costuming. De Lavallade began studying ballet privately with Italian ballerina Carmelita Maracci and later acting with Stella Adler. In 1954, De Lavallade made her Broadway debut in *House of Flowers*, and that same year, Alvin Ailey, the founder of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, moved to New York City to partner with her in that production. During that engagement in 1955, De Lavallade met and married dancer and actor Geoffrey Holder. With Holder, she completed her signature solo, *Come Sunday*, which he suggested choreographing to a black spiritual, sung by Odetta Gordon. In 1956, De Lavallade danced as the prima ballerina at the Metropolitan Opera performances of *Samson and Delilah*, and *Aida*. Also in 1956, she made her television debut in John Butler's ballet *Flight*, and in 1957, she appeared in the television production of Duke Ellington's *A Drum Is a Woman*. In pursuit of an acting, Lena Horne introduced her to the executives at Twentieth Century Fox, and between 1952 and 1955, she appeared in several films, including *Carmen Jones* with Dorothy Dandridge. In 1959, she starred in *Odds Against Tomorrow* with Harry Belafonte. De Lavallade also appeared in several off-Broadway productions, including *Othello* and *Death of a Salesman*. By the early 1960s, De Lavallade was a principal guest performer with Alvin Ailey's company and on the company's first European tour in 1962, the billing was De Lavallade-Ailey American Dance Company. *(biography from thehistorymakers.org)*

Lifetime Achievement (Posthumous)

Dancer and choreographer **Judith Jamison** was born on May 10, 1943 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Tessie Brown Jamison and John Jamison, Sr. While encouraged by her parents to study the piano and violin, Jamison gravitated towards ballet. At the age of six, Jamison began taking lessons at the Judimar School of Dance in Philadelphia. She went on to study the techniques of African American dance pioneer Katherine Dunham. Jamison graduated from Germantown High School in Philadelphia, and enrolled at Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. However, she left Fisk to study dance and kinesiology at the Philadelphia Dance Academy, now part of the University of the Arts. In 1964, Jamison earned critical acclaim for her work with choreographer Agnes de Mille and the American Ballet Theatre in New York. A year later, Alvin Ailey invited Jamison to join the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, where she was featured in numerous productions, toured with the company to Africa and Europe and earned international acclaim for her signature performance of *Cry*, a fifteen minute solo piece written by Ailey for Jamison. Jamison went on to appear as a guest performer with the San Francisco Ballet, the Swedish Royal Ballet, the Cullberg Ballet, and the Vienna State Ballet. In 1980, Jamison performed on Broadway in Duke Ellington's *Sophisticated Ladies* with Gregory Hines. That same year, Jamison began her own work as a choreographer. She premiered her first ballet, *Divining*, with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1984. In 1988, Jamison founded The Jamison Project Dance Company. Jamison returned to the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in 1989, assuming the role of artistic director following the death of founder Alvin Ailey. In 1993, Jamison choreographed *Hymn*, a tribute to Ailey, and published her autobiography,

Dancing Spirit. Under her leadership, the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater joined forces with Fordham University to establish a joint bachelor of fine arts program with a multicultural dance curriculum. Jamison also spearheaded the construction of the company's first permanent home, the Joan Weill Center for Dance. Although Jamison stepped down as artistic director in 2011, she remained associated with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater as artistic director emerita. Jamison passed away on November 9, 2024. *(biography from thehistorymakers.org)*

Outstanding Dance Educator (Higher Education - Emerging)



Dr. Shola K. Roberts: "Dance is purpose and intention" is something Dr. Shola K. Roberts strives to communicate with those she engages. Dr. Shola K. Roberts is an international performing dance artist, dance educator, choreographer, and traditional torch bearer, based in Arizona and New York, by way of Grenada, WI. She serves on the Arizona State University, Dance faculty as an Assistant Professor, spearheading the Dance Education track and specializing in African Diasporic movement. She is the Founder and Artistic Director of Dance Grenada, an organization and international dance festival rooted in creating a network for international and local Grenadian dance artists. Her work has been featured by prominent outlets including Essence Magazine and Black Enterprise. A proud Grenadian American, Dr. Roberts has worked with renowned dance companies and choreographers, including Kowteff West African Dance Company, Oyu Oro, and Fritzalyn Hector. She also choreographed the award-winning 2026 Soca Monarch of Grenada. In 2023, she founded the Shola K. Roberts Dance Company, premiering in Arizona with De Spirit is Callin.... A Columbia University Dance Education Program alumna, her research centers Ubuntu and culturally relevant approaches to Grenada's Folk dance in higher education, inspiring learners to embrace their communities and develop as holistic global citizens.

Outstanding Dance Educator (Higher Education - Emerging)



Jasmine Powell, a Creative Expressionist from Hillsborough, NC, pushes beyond traditional dance boundaries. Renowned for offering deep support through connections with her students, Powell's performances blend storytelling, embodiment, and the hidden stories within each dancer. Her background includes a BA from Oberlin College, an MFA from Hollins University in partnership with the American Dance Festival and Frankfurt University of Music and Performing Arts in Germany, and performing with companies and choreographers: Philadanco, D/2, Dance Diaspora, Dianne McIntyre, Milton Myers, Ronald K. Brown/Evidence, Bill T. Jones, Okwui Okpokwasili, Justin Tornow, KT Collective, Culture Mill, Princess Johnson, Moving Spirits Inc., and Chania Wilson, each adding insights to her journey. Powell's research in dance science, mental wellness, diasporic traditions, biology and somatics informs her teaching. As co-curator, director, producer, choreographer, performer, and teacher, she tours her choreographic works regionally, nationally, and internationally, including award-winning dance films and music videos highlighting visual storytelling. As an Elon University professor, she integrates dance and somatics, drawing on her certifications in Ailey School Horton Teacher Training, Bartenieff Fundamentals, Pilates, and Conscious Resilience Coaching to promote health, skill, creativity, and emotional insight while honoring

cultural histories embedded in body-based narratives, shaping her contributions through a creative-expressive lens.

Outstanding Dance Educator (Higher Education - Emerging)



Ricarrdo Hunter-Valentine is a second-generation Black Jamaican estadounidense artist, educator, and certified Ohio farmer whose interdisciplinary practice integrates dance, agriculture, and technology. Guided by intuition and rooted in values of collaboration, individuality, and intimacy, his work spans performance, research, and visual documentation. Hunter-Valentine's work has been presented at The Wexner Center for the Arts, Pulitzer Arts Foundation, and the Brooklyn Museum, with photographic exhibitions internationally in México and Brooklyn, NY. He is the co-founder of Brother(hood) Dance!, a collective engaging questions of Black identity through performance and research. Brother(hood) Dance! received the Elevated Artist Award (2024 & 2024) from the Greater Columbus Arts Council and the Bessie Award Honoree recognition for Afro/Solo/Man (2020). His ethnovisual project Where My People At?, developed during his 2020-2021 NorthStar Art Incubator Fellowship, explored themes of place, diaspora, and ancestral memory. Hunter-Valentine holds an MFA in Dance from The Ohio State University, where his graduate research centered on agricultural knowledge systems and emergent technologies in Black diasporic movement practices. He received the Dance/USA Fellowship (2025) to Artists and the Outstanding Dance Educator in Higher Education (Emerging) Award from NDEO (2026). He currently serves as Assistant Professor of Dance at Wayne State University.

Outstanding Leadership in Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion



Ellice Patterson is the founder/executive and artistic director of Abilities Dance, a Boston-based dance company that welcomes disabled and diverse artists. She serves on the board of Massachusetts Cultural Council and the editorial board of the Journal of Arts and Special Education. She was an artist in residence with the City of Boston’s transportation department 2022 - 2023. She has won the 2020 Ten Outstanding Young Leaders Award from Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce; the 2024 Bill Allan Award for Grassroots Advocacy from Disability Policy Consortium; the 2025 Bioeticando Award from Prospera Institute; and 2026 NDEO DEI Leadership Award. Abilities Dance under her leadership has won the 2020 UP Award from Mass Cultural Council for our achievements in accessibility across the Commonwealth and the 2023 Equity Award from Boston Cultural Council for our commitment to equity in the arts. Outside of self-produced Abilities Dance's shows, her Abilities Dance choreography has appeared in the MFA, Links Hall in Chicago, Gibney Dance in NYC, The Series: Vol IV at the Ailey Citigroup Theatre in NYC, and more. She has given lectures and workshops at schools, universities, and organizations across the country, including Harvard Graduate School of Education, Fidelity Investments, Boston University, and more.

Outstanding Leadership in K-12



Sanja Korman is a nationally recognized dance educator and PK–12 arts leader dedicated to advancing dance education through systemic reform. As the Fine Arts Dance Coordinator for Houston ISD, she oversees curriculum design, instructional coaching, and assessment for the nation's eighth-largest school district. Sanja's leadership scales impact systemwide: she authored Houston ISD's district-adopted PK–5 Dance Standards, vertically aligning them to Grades 6–12 TEKS, and was recently named a 2026 Champion in Education by Arts Connect Houston. Beyond Houston, Sanja shapes state-level policy. A former TEA appointee for secondary dance standards, she now leads the Texas Elementary Dance Teachers PLC, authoring the upcoming TEA Innovative Course for Elementary Dance. A frequent state and national presenter—including mentoring aspiring fine arts administrators through TFAA and serving as a CEDFA Training Cadre anchor presenter—Sanja holds multiple honors, including national and state Dance Educator of the Year titles and the 2026 She Moves Award. Through rigorous curriculum design, festivals, and mentorship, she continuously empowers educators and students to lead with creativity and confidence.

Outstanding Leadership in K-12



Betsy Graves began her teaching career at Broughton High School in January 2013 as Director of Dance. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Dance Education with K–12 Licensure from Meredith College in 2012 and was the first Meredith student to have choreography selected for the American College Dance Festival Gala. At Broughton, Betsy teaches all levels of dance and serves as Dance Team Coach and NHS Dance Advisor. She also serves as Fine Arts Department Chair, Senior Graduation Coordinator, and Musical Choreographer/Director. She is the BHS staff retention chair. Beyond Broughton, Betsy is a member of NCDEO and NDEO, contributes to WCPSS as a curriculum writer, standards facilitator, and lead dance teacher. She presents arts education programs statewide and travels as a guest choreographer and instructor. Betsy has been recognized as the 2017–2018 Wake County Teacher of the Year, 2016–2017 Broughton High School Teacher of the Year, a 2017 WRAL Teacher of the Week, 2018–2019 National Magnet Regional Teacher of the Year, 2024 K–12 North Carolina Dance Educator of the Year, and 2023 Broughton Jenrette Excellence in Education recipient. In 2021, BHS Dance was named Raleigh's Best Dance Studio of the Decade by BroadwayWorld.



Outstanding Leadership in Dance Studios

Sheela Ramanath is a distinguished Bharatanatyam artist, educator, choreographer, and founder of Kalavaridhi Center for Performing Arts, where she promotes Bharatanatyam (Indian classical dance) through exceptional training and artistic excellence. Initiated into Bharatanatyam in India by eminent teachers including Ms. Sridevi Thirumalai, Sheela trained for ten years before pursuing advanced study under Ms. B. Bhanumati, Director of Nrityakalamandiram. She was among the select artists chosen for Bharatanjali, the acclaimed troupe founded by Ms. B. Bhanumati that pioneered group choreography in Bharatanatyam and was recognized by the Indian

Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) as the “Best Bharatanatyam Dance Troupe.” As a soloist and member of Bharatanjali, Sheela performed extensively across India, the UK, and the US. Deeply rooted in tradition yet continually evolving, Sheela explores the interplay of music and dance through her choreography. She has trained numerous students over the years. She and her students have performed at prestigious venues including Carnegie Hall and the Kennedy Center, and internationally in India, Italy and Portugal. Sheela holds a Master’s degree in Bharatanatyam with distinction. Her honors include the Del Kieffner Award (2026) and the International Thought Leader Award (2026).

Outstanding Leadership in Higher Education



Ji-Eun Lee: Jieun is a faculty member in the Department of Dance at Radford University. As an educator, artist, and advocate, her work focuses on intercultural engagement, innovation, and expanding the role of Asian dance in U.S. higher education and interdisciplinary contexts. Originally from South Korea, she has developed an international professional career that bridges dance, education, community engagement, and cultural exchange. Her artistic work has received recognition internationally, including awards for choreography and honors for contributions to cultural and community initiatives. She has also collaborated with government-sponsored international organizations on projects supporting cultural exchange and community engagement. She has advocated for greater inclusion of Asian dance and perspectives in academic curricula. Her initiatives have helped introduce Asian dance and expand intercultural programming across campus and the community. She has led and supported initiatives such as International Education Week and International Culture Night. Beyond the university, she engages with local schools and community organizations in Virginia, using dance, cultural education, and events to foster creativity, intercultural understanding, and meaningful connections among diverse communities.

Outstanding Dance Educator (PK-12 Established)



Tony Jackson-Hood is a dance educator and choreographer based in Maryland. A Philadelphia native, he began his formal training at the Philadelphia High School for Creative & Performing Arts and continued at renowned institutions including PHILADANCO, The Rock School for Dance Education, and Dance Theatre of Harlem. In 2004, he was named a Coca-Cola Arts Award Scholar and received a Presidential Scholarship to the University of the Arts, where he earned his B.F.A. in Dance in 2008. Tony danced professionally with companies such as Eleone Dance Theatre, Philadanco’s D/2, Rebecca Davis Dance Company, and the Philadelphia Opera. He has performed works by celebrated choreographers, including Louis Johnson, Christopher Huggins, Roni Koresh, and Darrell Grand Moultrie. Since 2022, Tony has been the Dance Director at Brooklyn Park Middle School in Anne Arundel County Public Schools, leading a thriving public magnet dance program. He is a certified K–12 Dance Educator and holds ABT® Teacher Training Certification in Pre-Primary through Level 3 of the ABT® National Training Curriculum. In 2023, he was honored as Maryland Dance Educator of the Year (K–12) by the Maryland Dance Education Association. Tony earned his M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from the American College of Education in 2025.

Outstanding Dance Educator (PK-12 Established)



Diedre Nyota Dawkins is an award-winning dancer, educator, choreographer, and cultural leader committed to the transformative power of dance. From international stages to Baltimore classrooms, her work centers on preserving cultural legacy, developing young artists, and using movement as a vehicle for connection and change. A 2003 New York Dance and Performance Bessie Award recipient for Outstanding Performance, Dawkins received the 2016 President Barack Obama Lifetime Achievement Award for National and Community Service and the 2020 Evidence Award for Artistic Expression. She was also named ConneXions' 2016 Teacher of the Year. Dawkins spent eight years performing with Ronald K. Brown/EVIDENCE, teaching and performing throughout Senegal, Switzerland, Greece, France, London, and Cuba. Her performance career includes work with Bill T. Jones, Bebe Miller, Kevin Iega Jeff, Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Amaniyea Payne, Babatunde Olatunji, and Max Roach. A graduate of NYU Tisch School of the Arts and the MFA program at the University of Maryland, College Park, Dawkins serves as Dance Director at ConneXions Charter School, Associate Professor at Johns Hopkins Peabody Conservatory, and Director of AileyCamp Baltimore, remaining deeply devoted to mentoring young artists and cultivating the next generation through dance, culture, education, and community.

Outstanding Dance Researcher



Moncell Durden is an Associate Professor of Practice at the USC Glorya Kaufman School of Dance, performer, educator, choreographer, documentarian, embodied historian, author, and creator of Ethnocorporeology, the study of what the body is doing and what it is saying. He spent ten years performing with Philadelphia Hip Hop company Rennie Harris Puremovement. Durden specializes in embodied pedagogical practices that reveal cultural and historical context through his research on the Morphology of A.F.R.O. Kinetic Memory. Teaching nationally and internationally, his expertise includes locking, House, Hip Hop, authentic jazz, and American and European social dances from the 1600s to the present. He is the author of Beginning Hip-Hop Dance (Human Kinetics), with contributions to Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches, Rooted Jazz Dance, Encyclopedia of African Cultural Heritage in North America, and The Oxford Handbook of Hip Hop Dance. His consulting credits include Baz Luhrmann's Elvis, Disney+'s The World According to Jeff Goldblum, The Porter, Camille A. Brown's Mr. TOL E. RAncE, TED-Ed's The History of African-American Social Dance, Ma Rainey, and Broadway's The Hippest Trip. His documentary Everything Remains Raw examines the history of Hip Hop dance.

Outstanding Researcher



Susan M. Bauer, MFA, MSME/T, RSDE is a dance/somatic educator, founder of Embodiment in Education™, and author of The Embodied Teen: A Somatic Curriculum for Teaching Body-Mind Awareness, Kinesthetic Intelligence, and Social and Emotional Skills. She has taught for over three decades in the U.S and Asia, informed by her extensive background in dance, Body-Mind Centering®, and Authentic Movement. Susan offers an Embodiment in Education™ Teacher Certification Program and has a practice as a Master Somatic Movement Therapist. Susan's passionate vision of a more

holistic model of education—inclusive of movement and body-mind awareness—continues to inspire her to support the well-being of adults and youth alike in these challenging times. She has served on the Board of Directors of ISMETA and holds an MFA from the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA and an MA in Dance and Movement Studies from Wesleyan University. Susan was also a Fulbright Scholar to Bali, Indonesia, where she has studied dance and ritual since 1997, performing in numerous intercultural collaborations and teaching Balinese dance on the faculty at the University of San Francisco. Her numerous publications include chapters in the books Dance, Somatics and Spiritualities, and in Authentic Movement, Volume Two.

Outstanding Dance Researcher



Elizabeth Stich is an associate professor at the University of Georgia specializing in aerial dance, contemporary modern, and creative coursework. Her choreography has been featured in Tuacahn Amphitheatre's Broadway season, Santa Barbara Floor to Air Festival, Red Rock Dance Festival, and the American College Dance Association regional gala, as well as numerous university dance programs.
Elizabeth's scholarly research on aerial dance has been published in the Journal of Dance Education, Theatre, Dance, and Performance Training, Performance Research, and Choreographic Practices. She regularly presents at national and international conferences including NDEO, Theater and Performance Research Association, Association for Theatre in Higher Education, Dance Science and Somatic Educators, and Motus Humanus. She is the author, with Julianna Hane, of the book Aerial Arts and Dance Improvisation: A Practical Guide to Creativity for Aerialists. Prior to joining UGA Dance, Elizabeth was an assistant professor at Utah Tech University where she founded the aerial dance program. She holds an MFA from the University of Utah, a certificate in Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis from Integrated Movement Studies and is a graduate of New England Center for Circus Arts.

Outstanding Dance Researcher



Ali Duffy (PhD, MFA) is Associate Chair of the School of Theatre and Dance and Professor and Graduate Director of Dance at Texas Tech University. She is the founder and Artistic Director of Flatlands Dance Theatre and Co-Director of the International Parenting and Dance Network. She has created and directed 35 original productions for Flatlands Dance Theatre and is commissioned internationally as a choreographer, scholar, and performer. Her recent book publications include Pandemic Motherhood (Routledge), Research in Dance (Human Kinetics), Dancing Motherhood (Routledge), Careers in Dance (Human Kinetics), and Meet the Dancemakers (Raider Publishing). She also publishes journal articles in dance, dance education, and arts administration and policy journals. Her research has been supported by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Trust, the Mid-America Arts Alliance, REA Charitable, Community Foundation of West Texas, and the City of Lubbock. She is also a Fulbright Specialist through 2029.

Congratulations to the 2026 Scholarship Recipients!

2026 Student Conference Scholarship Recipients

Nicole Carbone (Towson University) - Undergraduate Student Scholarship Recipient
Samantha Walker (The University of Tampa) - Undergraduate Student Scholarship Recipient
Bella Chen (New York University) - Graduate Student Scholarship Recipient
Brian Golden (California Institute of the Arts) - Graduate Student Scholarship Recipient

2026 Professional Development Scholarships

Jamie Arnold
Jose Argueta
Dania Brantner
August Broberg
Alice Bruter
Carlie Bonilla
Kimberly Campbell
Yolanda Chavez
Maria Chimarusti
Aimee Coles
Nikki Feick
Ally Ferry
Sue Glenn
Juliana Gorena
Sarah Duren
Deanna Nagle
Maja Nadel
Rickey Phoummany
Alessia La Marca

Kamil Lowe
Jacqueline Landeros
Dr. Andrea Lee
Linxin Li (Kisa Li)
Shannon Mannuccia
Samyuktha Punthambekar
Ellen Rosa
Monica Drohan
Tamara Sangobamike Williams
Christal Wagner
Dominquie Walters
Thabang Queench
Lelu Vandenberg
Allyson DiMilia
Sarah Duren
Darius Anthony
Amal Elwardi
Deanna Nagle
Carlie Bonilla

Dance Educator 'In Memoriam'

NDEO recognizes dance educators who have recently passed, and their contributions to the field. We thank their family, friends, and colleagues for sharing their photos and biographies. The dance community mourns these educators, and sends comfort to all who knew them.

Memorials appear in no particular order.



Deborah Byczkowski | 1989 - 2026

Deborah "Miss Dee" Byczkowski was an innovative dance educator, mentor, artist, and founder of VOLTA Performing Arts in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood. A lifelong dancer and graduate of Columbia College Chicago with a degree in Dance Pedagogy, Deborah devoted her life to reimagining what dance education could be: inclusive, science-based, and rooted in the belief that every student deserves to feel seen, valued, and empowered. After teaching throughout Chicago, Deborah founded VOLTA Performing Arts in 2017 with a vision that extended beyond creating technically strong dancers. She believed dance should nurture healthy bodies, curious minds, and confident human beings. Integrating movement science into her curriculum, she challenged traditional teaching methods that too often prioritized aesthetics over well-being. Her guiding belief—that everyBODY has a dancer's body—helped students discover confidence by understanding their own unique bodies. As she often said, "We are not here to teach your child dance; we are here to teach your child how to dance." Known affectionately as "Miss Dee," Deborah created more than a dance studio—she cultivated a vibrant community. VOLTA became a welcoming home where children, families, and artists felt supported, inspired, and genuinely seen. Her warmth, generosity, loyalty, and joyful spirit touched everyone who walked through its doors. Those who knew Deborah remember her as someone who greeted others with genuine kindness, celebrated their successes as if they were her own, and made every person who entered VOLTA feel they belonged. Deborah's commitment to the arts extended beyond her own students. She intentionally made VOLTA an affordable creative home for Chicago artists, opening her space to local artists and community organizations so new artistic work could flourish. Fluent in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and able to teach dance using sign language, she worked to ensure every student and family felt welcome, understood, and included. Deborah Byczkowski will be remembered not only for transforming the way dance education could be taught, but for transforming the lives of those fortunate enough to know her. Her spirit will be profoundly missed, while her vision and the community she so lovingly built will continue to inspire generations of dancers.



Simone Forti | 1935 - 2026

Simone Forti was an Italian-American dancer, choreographer, artist, and writer whose experiments with movement, improvisation, and everyday action helped lay the foundations for postmodern dance. A deeply influential figure, Forti spent more than six decades exploring movement as a way of perceiving, thinking, and being in the world. Forti studied with pioneering dance artist Anna Halprin in the San Francisco Bay Area, whose approach to movement, improvisation, and the environment influenced her artistic vision. After moving to New York in 1959, Forti studied composition with Robert Dunn alongside artists including Yvonne Rainer and Steve Paxton. In 1960, she created her seminal Dance Constructions, bringing together movement, physical tasks, improvisation, and sculptural

objects. Works such as Huddle, Slant Board, and See Saw challenged distinctions between dance and visual art and influenced the artists who would establish Judson Dance Theater. Rainer later described Forti as Judson's "inspiration and fountainhead." Forti's investigations continued to evolve throughout her career. Her observations of animals inspired her "Zoo Mantras," while her improvisational work integrated movement, language, sound, memory, and responses to the natural and political worlds. In her "News Animations," she brought movement and spoken language together in response to current events to make sense of an everchanging world. Forti performed with simplicity, clarity, and warmth, while maintaining an enduring attention to the intelligence of the moving body. Forti was a prolific writer, teacher, visual artist, and collaborator whose influence extended across generations of dancers. In the later decades of her life, she taught improvisation at UCLA, sharing her exploratory approach with successive generations of performers. Her 1974 book, Handbook in Motion, remains an important account of her artistic thinking and embodied investigations. In 2023, she received the Venice Biennale's Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement in Dance. Simone Forti died in Los Angeles on July 29, 2026, at the age of 91. Her legacy lives on not only in the works she created, but in the permission she gave generations of artists to listen more closely—to gravity, sensation, impulse, the environment, and the body itself as a source of intelligence and creativity.



Linda Hodes | 1931 - 2025

Linda Hodes was a luminous modern dancer and a beloved teacher and mentor, known especially for her work with the Martha Graham Dance Company, the Batsheva Dance Company, and the Paul Taylor Dance Company. Born on June 3, 1931, in New York City, she began taking classes at the age of nine, at the Martha Graham School. In 1953, she joined Graham's company, touring the world and performing major roles, including Joan in Seraphic Dialogue, Cassandra in Clytemnestra, and both Eve and Lilith in Embattled Garden. When Paul Taylor founded his company in the mid-1950s, Linda was simultaneously a member, performing roles in Three Epitaphs, Junction, and Insects and Heroes, among others. In 1953, Linda married fellow Graham dancer Stuart Hodes; their children, Catherine Hodes and Martha Hodes, were born in 1956 and 1958. In 1964, Linda left the United States for Israel, selected by Martha Graham to help found the Batsheva Dance Company. For the next thirteen years, she served there as dancer, teacher, rehearsal director, and artistic director. Divorced in 1965, Linda married the Batsheva dancer Ehud Ben-David in 1968; their daughter, Tal Ben-David, was born in 1970. Widowed in 1977, Linda returned to New York and the Martha Graham Dance Company, where she served as director of the school, rehearsal director, and eventually associate artistic director and co-artistic director. Soon after Graham's death in 1991, Linda returned to the Paul Taylor Dance Company, where she served as director of the school and rehearsal director for the company, and founding director and artistic director of the junior company, Taylor 2. At various points in her career, Linda danced in Broadway and off-Broadway shows and in television productions; taught at the Neighborhood Playhouse, the Juilliard School, the American Dance Festival, and the Nederlands Dans Theatre; and served as an associate producer for Dance in America. In later years, Linda worked part-time with Pascal Rioult Dance Theater, as well as continuing her association with the Graham and Taylor companies. She died on August 1, 2025, at the age of 94.



Brook Manning | 1970 - 2026

Brook began her dance career with Los Angeles Ballet, training with John Clifford and Irina Kosmovska and performing with the company in Petipa and Fokine ballets. She performed for many years as a soloist with Palos Verdes Ballet and danced solo roles in the works of Donald Hewitt and Arturo Fernandez, and in feature film and music video work. Brook was awarded a scholarship for excellence in dance from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts and earned her Master's Degree in Performance Studies. She taught ballet at Bates College, University of Hawaii and Portland Community College. She found joy in traveling to 25 countries in order to experience dance and theatre in its cultural context. Brook was more recently a beloved member of the Oregon Ballet Theatre community, working in Education & Community Engagement as a Teaching Artist and Historian for the organization. She reached a wide audience with her thoughtful presentations as a speaker/historian, even educating the community with online content during the pandemic. As a Teaching Artist, she deeply enjoyed the opportunity to share her passion with students of all ages during field trips to OBT and Touch Tours at the theatre during every production.



Sheila Marion | Unknown - 2026

Ohio State's Department of Dance mourns the loss of Emerita Professor Dr. Sheila Marion, who died on June 22, 2026. Professor Marion served as director of the Dance Notation Bureau Extension for Education and Research at Ohio State until spring 2011. Her research was in the application of computer technology for dance notation. Professor Marion was an elected fellow of the International Council of Kinetography Laban, and was selected by Ann Hutchinson Guest as a consultant for her Advanced Labanotation textbook. She served on the ICKL Research Panel. Professor Marion notated Daniel Nagrin's Jazz Three Ways and Jazz Dance Styles, Marion Scott's Sevenfold, and Tap Dance: A Dictionary of Tap Steps in Labanotation. Her directing credits include works by Ruth Currier, Doris Humphrey, Sophie Maslow, Buzz Miller, Marion Scott, Anna Sokolow, and Helen Tamiris.



Toni Pierce-Sands | 1962 - 2026

Toni Pierce-Sands (TU Dance Founding Artistic Director) Prior to co-founding TU Dance, Minnesota native Toni Pierce-Sands performed with Minnesota Dance Theatre, Tanz Forum in Germany, Rick Odums in Paris, and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, where she was a featured soloist in such signature pieces as Revelations, Cry and Rainbow Round My Shoulder. Her command of the Horton Technique has led to teaching posts throughout the United

States and Europe. Toni directed programming at TU Dance Center in Saint Paul. She was a full-time core faculty member at the University of Minnesota for twenty years and also served as Director of University Dance Theatre. Toni has been featured in COSMOPOLITAN Germany and GQ publications, the American Express Alvin Ailey commercial, and the Lester Horton Technique instructional DVD series. She wrote columns for Dance Studio Life magazine on various pedagogical approaches for modern dance. Toni was awarded a 2004 McKnight Artist Fellowship in Dance, named the Sage Awards' "2011 Leadership Training and was a panelist for the 2018 Dance Miami Choreographers' Program. She served as a member of the University of Minnesota's Northrop Advisory Board.



Don Redlich | 1929 - 2026

Dancer, choreographer, educator Don Redlich died in Santa Fe, New Mexico on Tuesday, April 28th. He was 96 years old. Don's story is too big to fit into a small box. Born in 1929 in Winona, Minnesota, he fell in love with theater and dance and landed in New York at just the right time. His life story bridges Broadway, the roots of modern dance and the post-modern avant-garde. He was a performer, choreographer, company director and influential educator. He studied with Marge H'Doubler, Louise Kloepper and Shirley Genther at the University of Wisconsin and with German émigré and early modern dance pioneer, Hanya Holm, in New York and at Colorado College. Holm choreographed her final dances for the Don Redlich Dance Company. He taught at Juilliard, Sarah Lawrence, Adelphi and many other institutions nationally and internationally. He was a tenured professor at Rutgers, Mason Gross School. Don was a mainstay at the American Dance Festival and with the Don Redlich Dance Company, was fundamental to the dissemination of dance across the United States through the Artists Touring Program and the Artists-in-the-Schools which were funded, in the 1970s, by the National Endowment for the Arts. Through his teaching, he had a great influence on many, many students and company members who went on to make lives in dance and other fields.



Judy Rice | 1961 - 2026

Judy Fielman Rice (February 28, 1961–May 12, 2026) was a ballet teacher and performer born in Indianapolis, Indiana. She studied at the National Ballet School of Canada and performed with the Joffrey Ballet, the National Tap Dance Company of Canada, and American Ballet Comedy. In 1990, she joined the faculty of the University of Michigan, where she taught ballet for the departments of dance and musical theater for more than three decades. She also taught at Broadway Dance Center, Peridance, Pace University, Steps on Broadway, The Joffrey Ballet School, and Joffrey Midwest. Rice developed ballet class CDs with accompanist Paul Lewis and producer Rob Martens, and she co-founded the educational project Behind Barres in May 2000.



Shirley Russon Ririe | 1929 - 2025

Shirley was a powerful, creative force and a leader in dance education. She co-founded the Ririe-Woodbury Dance Company in 1964, a still thriving professional contemporary dance company based in Salt Lake City, Utah. Ririe-Woodbury has toured extensively throughout the US and abroad. When the "Artists in the Schools" and the "Dance Touring Program" began nationally, the company was fortunate to be chosen for both programs. Shirley emerged as the leader in AIS and helped design the program for the next 13 years. She studied and performed with most of the originators of modern dance and became an expert of the subject of dance for children. She created over 100 choreographic works. She was a full professor of dance and taught full or part time for 42 years at the University of Utah and Brigham Young University. Some of the many awards she received were: Merit of Honor from the U of U, the Plaudit Award in 1981 and Presidents Award in 1993 from the National Dance Association. East High's Distinguished alumnae award in 1986 and the Governor's Award in 1990. She lobbied with the Utah legislature for 12 years, securing funding for the arts including the ZAP (zoo arts and parks) tax. She was married to Rhees Ririe for 59 years, and together they had 4 daughters.



Claire Sheridan | 1954 - 2026

Claire Sheridan established and directed the dance program at Saint Mary's College of California (1977-1997) and was the founder of LEAP, a national Bachelor of Arts degree program specifically designed for professional dancers. Ms. Sheridan also has extensive international experience as a teacher and choreographer at The Saint Petersburg Conservatory (Russia), Cambridge University (England), Charles University (Prague), the National Institute of Advanced Studies (India), and at academies and colleges in Germany, Switzerland, Palestine, Bosnia, Bangladesh, and Japan. She was a longtime education consultant and guest lecturer for San Francisco Ballet.

Ms. Sheridan founded the Liberal Education for Arts Professionals (LEAP) Program in 1999, at a time when a college degree and a dance career were treated as mutually exclusive. LEAP provided professional dancers and other performing artists a unique path to access higher education—a community for whom access to college had been traditionally rare or impractical. LEAP is specifically designed to deliver a comprehensive liberal arts education to professional dancers and performing artists from around the country, with the goal of completing a Bachelor's Degree in Performing Arts from Saint Mary's College through part-time study. LEAP has grown into a program spanning San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, having graduated hundreds of professional dancers.

In Ms. Sheridan's own words, "LEAP is now 26 years old; with an online program that serves dancers all over world. Its alumni have been accepted into top graduate schools and are enjoying new careers in a variety of different fields such as Art History, Business, Law, Psychology, Physical Therapy, Medicine, and Education. Some stay in the dance world as artistic directors or teachers. Other graduates are still dancing professionally, but with a secure sense of the future and the knowledge that with the degree

they will experience a much easier career transition upon retirement from the stage. The dancers' success has proven that it indeed benefits society to honor the dignity of dancers and recognize their capacity for work, their commitment to excellence, and their love of learning." Claire Sheridan passed away on July 15, 2026, after a battle with cancer.



Glenna Batson | 1948 - 2025

Glenna Batson brought a trans-disciplinary perspective to embodied learning through a synthesis of Dance, Somatics, embodied cognitive neuroscience, and neuro-rehabilitative medicine. She trained as both a physical therapist and a dancer and was an internationally recognized teacher of the Alexander Technique. At the American Dance Festival in the 1980s, she was one of the key figures who brought Somatic Movement Education into modern dance training, at a time when few counted the internal experience of the body as knowledge. Her laugh carried across a room. Her eyes sparkled and her presence filled the space. She helped people notice their habits: physical, emotional and perceptual, and then invited them into choice. As awareness spread on a student's face, there would be a gasp, a smile, sometimes tears or a burst of laughter. Glenna believed that artists are not machines. She fought discrimination with the same energy, especially where it met embodiment: the elderly, the ill, the incarcerated. She paid attention to people the world had stopped looking at. She never performed kindness. She lived it. She taught and presented in more than a dozen countries. Her research ranged from balance and fall prevention in older adults to improvisation and agency in people with Parkinson's disease. She was prolific, publishing an astounding variety of articles, books, and papers, among them "Body and Mind in Motion: Dance and Neuroscience in Conversation" (Co-Author), "Dance, Somatics, and Spiritualities: Contemporary Sacred Narratives", (Co-Editor), and her final work, "artmaking as embodied enquiry: entering the fold", (Co-Author). She wrote with people rather than about them. At NDEO she served on the editorial board of the Journal of Dance Education for many years. She could hold her own equally with artists, neuroscientists, physicians, and the neighbor down the street- and often did, without losing interest in the person in front of her. Movement mattered to her at every age, her own included. She danced and taught the power of movement almost until her final breath, curious about art and about people the whole way. Thank you, Glenna. Keep dancing. Keep laughing. Stay curious.

NDEO honors all dance educators who have passed…both named and unnamed.

This is not a comprehensive list, as all photos and biographies are courtesy of family, friends, and colleagues of the deceased who submitted this information to NDEO through an open call.

NDEO's Strategic Plan

2023 - 2027

Throughout 2022, the organization immersed itself in a strategic planning process. We chose Maryland Nonprofits as our consultant partner due to our ongoing relationship and their insight into our current work, both cultivated during the prior year's JDEI Initiative. The strategic planning process was overseen by a representative workgroup of members, board, and staff. The process included: survey data from the membership; focus groups with members, board, and staff; and a market analysis. The Strategic Plan was approved by the NDEO Board on 10-15-22. The revised organizational mission, vision, and values, and 2023-2027 strategic priorities are:

Revised Vision and Mission

Vision: The National Dance Education Organization envisions equitable and accessible dance education for all.

Mission: To advance dance education for all by providing professional development and cultivating a community of support, resources, advocacy, and research.

Values

- **Inclusion:** We celebrate dance education for all across every dance form, genre, sector, pedagogy, and career stage.
- **Advocacy**: We recognize the importance of having a seat at the table locally, nationally, and internationally to promote dance education for all.
- **Innovation**: We encourage creativity/creative thinking.
- **Excellence**: We are committed to doing our best for the health of the organization, service to the members, and responsiveness to the field.
- **Community**: We foster an environment of understanding, cohesiveness, and respect within and across our dance education community, board members and staff.
- **Teaching and Learning:** We are lifelong learners and share information, knowledge, and resources uplifting the value of dance in education, research, and society as part of the human experience.

Strategic Priorities 2023 - 2027

1. **Organization and Financial Sustainability**–promote organizational and financial growth and sustainability
2. **Access and Inclusion**—expand access to and increase diversity in membership participation
3. **Professional Development**—develop programs that are reflective of and responsive to membership needs
4. **Advocacy**—strengthen advocacy for dance education at the local, state, and national level

To View the Strategic Plan

SCAN ME

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access

At NDEO, we believe in dance education for ALL and have embarked on a journey to transform our organization over the coming years.

Statement on Social Justice

The National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) actively promotes the respect for and value of human diversity within its membership and the professions of dance. In recognition of this basic tenet, NDEO prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, creed, sex, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, sexual orientation, ethnicity or national origin, disability, and veteran status relative to participation in, access to, or content of its programs, activities, and publications. NDEO shall not make, condone, or tolerate remarks or inferences that reflect disrespect, harassment, or discrimination against individuals or groups.

Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (JDEI) Initiative

In Fall 2020, responding to input from members, staff, and board and with guidance and recommendation from then NDEO Advisory Board Director of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) Crystal Davis, ED/CEO Susan McGreevy-Nichols met with equity consultants at Maryland Nonprofits to craft a year-long audit of NDEO programs and organizational structure through the lens of justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion (JDEI). The audit helped provide a roadmap for organizational and programmatic changes over the next few years as NDEO embodies its commitment to becoming an anti-racist organization.

JDEI Audit

Maryland Nonprofits led NDEO through a process in four stages:

Discovery and Design ~ Understand and identify areas that need to be strengthened for the organization's growth.

Planning and Co-Design ~ Conduct and analyze a membership survey and develop a unified vision of the proposed plan of action.

Implementation ~ Activate member work groups to initiate the organization and program review.

Action and Accountability ~ Conclude with an action and accountability plan outlining concrete steps to be taken in subsequent years.

The audit concluded in February 2022 with the presentation of the JDEI Action and Accountability Plan to the NDEO membership. NDEO is working to implement the recommendations over the next few years.

NDEO Staff and Interns



Vilma Braja Rama, Director of Finance and HR

Vilma is originally from Albania and came to the US as a young girl. She has always loved dance but hasn't had the chance to pursue it. She worked for six years at Chevy Chase Bank as a Branch Manager. This is where she met Jane Bonbright and started learning more about NDEO. In 2009, she decided to return to school full-time; and was able to join NDEO part-time. After completing her degree in Finance from the University of Maryland, Vilma took over as the Director of Finance for NDEO. Meanwhile, she has decided to also pursue a degree in Accounting while remaining a dancer at heart. She/Her/Hers



Betsy Loikow, Director of Programs & Organizational Effectiveness

Betsy Loikow, CMA, grew up in Washington, D.C., and began studying dance with NDEO founder Rima Faber, performing with The Primary Movers Performance Company as a child. She continued her dance education at the Washington School of Ballet and the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange. She continued dancing and choreographing through college and graduated with a B.A. in film and political science from Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, NY. She has worked on both local and national electoral campaigns in the U.S. and abroad. She joined NDEO in 2009, combining her love of dance with her passion for advocacy. Betsy continues dancing on a daily basis in the D.C. area as a founding member and Co-Artistic Chair of Glade Dance Collective and co- founder and organizer of the NACHMO DC annual regional festival. She/Her/Hers.

NDEO Staff and Interns



Kaitlynn Schultz, Professional Learning and Events Manager

Kaitlynn is originally from Rochester, NY. As a recent graduate from SUNY Brockport with a degree in Recreation Management, she completed an internship with NDEO during the summer and fall of 2019 wherein she learned the ins and outs of the organization and experienced what it is like to work at a non-profit arts administration organization. While at SUNY Brockport, she coupled her coursework with her long-standing relationship with dance, focusing on Private Sector/Studios with a special interest in Early Childhood and working with students with disabilities. Over the past four years, she taught Strike it Up Artistic Center, a dance studio in Ontario, NY where she'd been training since the age of 11, and she currently teaches in Northern Virginia and Maryland. As a dance teacher herself, she hopes to be able to use her knowledge of the field and her previous experience in customer service to serve the membership. She/Her/Hers.



Shelby Bensinger, Student Programs and Services Manager

Shelby began her work with NDEO as an intern in 2017 and now serves as the Student Programs and Services Manger . In her role, she supports several of the organization's core initiatives, including the National Honor Society for Dance Arts (NHSDA), and National Conference. She holds a BS in Dance and a BA in Sociology from Wayne State University, along with a PreK–12 Dance Education teaching certification. Shelby remains an active member in her local dance education community and is as the assistant director of the pre-professional company at Spotlight Dance Works in Michigan. Her cumulative experience in arts administration and as a dance educator, gives her the insight and experience to continue to support the work of NDEO and the field of dance education at large. She/Her/Hers.

NDEO Staff and Interns



Kari Schrade, Program Coordinator (OPDI)

Kari Schrade, MA, grew up in Virginia and is a part of a very musical family which naturally lead to participating in show choir and other singing and dance groups in her childhood. Kari holds a B.A. in Anthropology with an emphasis on Archaeology from Brigham Young University. While at BYU Kari had the opportunity to embrace her love of dance and take dance classes each semester, ranging from world dance to ballroom to ballet and everything in between. One of Kari's favorite experiences involving dance was having the opportunity to participate in the BYU Lu'ua, where she was able to perform a Maori dance involving poi balls. Kari received her MFA in Art Gallery and Museum Studies from Manchester University in England. Kari had the opportunity to join NDEO in April 2018 as a temporary employee and is excited to be a part of such a wonderful organization. She/Her/Hers.



Maddi Andree, Marketing and Communications Coordinator

Maddi's connection to dance education began under the instruction of her mother, who was Maddi's primary instructor for most of her early life. Maddi went on to train at the Center of Creative Arts in
St Louis, Missouri before earning her B.F.A. in Dance and B.A. in Journalism at the University of Iowa. Over the course of her career, Maddi has performed with small companies across the country while supporting marketing initiatives for diverse organizations. Now based in Madison, Wisconsin, Maddi is active in the local dance community as a part-time ballet instructor and choreographer. Maddi is thrilled to join NDEO as Marketing and Communications Coordinator, eager to contribute to its mission. She/Her/Hers.

NDEO Staff and Interns

2026 Interns



Jess Goodwin

Conference
(Summer 2026)



Kendall Hayes

Marketing
(Summer 2026)



Evelyn Ealey

JoDE
(Spring 2026)

Board & Advisory Council

Executive Committee

President
Julie Pentz

Past-President
Yoav Kaddar

President-Elect
Cristina Goletti

Recording Secretary
Sarah Barry

Treasurer
Naomi Boyd

Board of Directors

Board Director - At Large
Catherine MacMaster

Board Director - Southeast
Cara Lavallee

Board Director - West
Christine Rudy-Reed

Board Director - Northeast
Darryl Pilate II

Board Director - North Central
Helen Buck-Pavlick

Board Director - Southwest
Tiffany White

Board Director - South Central
Katherine Jerome

The Board of Directors provides leadership and assumes responsibilities for establishing and implementing duties relevant to policy-making, financial matters, and legislative issues. The Board consists of: the officers of President, Secretary, Treasurer, and either President Elect or Past President; 6 regional board members; and the Executive Director. All board members have voting rights. Each board member acts as a liaison to an assigned Advisory Council position.

Board & Advisory Council

Advisory Council

Mentorship Advisor
Abigail Agresta-Stratton

Development Advisor
Leighann Kowalsky

Student Initiatives Co-Advisor
JC Burnett-Gordon

Advocacy Advisor
Stephanie Milling

Graduate Student Representative
Reign Capers

NHSDA (Honor Society) Advisor
Quan Powers

Student Initiatives Co-Advisor
Bradford Chin

Dance & Disability Advisor
Rachel Repinz

Awards Advisor
Yauri Dalencour

Undergraduate Student Representative
Aliyah Spears

Research Advisor
Maria Gabriela Estrada

Curriculum, Standards, & Assessment Advisor
Lynn Tuttle

DELRdi Advisor
Rima Faber

Publication Liaison: DEiP Editor
Elizabeth McPherson

E-Communications Advisor
Maria Haralambis

Publication Liaison: JODE Editor
Karen Schupp

The Advisory Council provides advice and assumes responsibilities in specific areas of interest. Each Advisory Council chair works with a committee of volunteer members who assist in carrying out the duties and tasks of that position. Committee work provides additional opportunities to serve NDEO and the field while also providing training for future leaders.

Vote for your NDEO Board of Directors & Advisory Council!

Voting is open Sept. 24th - October 17th

Secretary
Cara Lavallee

Board of Directors
Southeast Region
Emily Enloe
Quan Powers
Gabrielle Tull
Kevin Warner
Amanda Gabaldon

Southwest Region
Ryan McMullen
Tiffany White

Development
Paramita Bhattacharyya
Leighann Kowalsky

Dance & Disability
Rachel Repinz
Valkyrie Yao
Kerry Thompson

Student Initiatives
Bradford Chin
Rayven Armijo

Graduate Student Rep
Lóri Fejes

Undergraduate Student Rep
Caitlin Garcia

VOTE HERE

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

CALL FOR PAPERS

Journal of Dance Education

ndeo national dance education organization

The *Journal of Dance Education (JoDE)* invites submissions from researchers, scholars, and practitioners using a variety of frameworks and methods about a broad range of dance education topics.

JoDE publishes original articles on topics related to the practical and theoretical aspects associated with dance education in order to examine and bring awareness to a diverse set of issues and practices related to dance teaching and learning. Topics within the journal include but are not limited to: training of dancers, curriculum, pedagogy, teaching methodology, standards, assessment, dance administration, collaboration, creativity, dance advocacy, social justice issues, historical and cultural contexts, choreography, technology and media, online learning, dance and disability, and integrated and interdisciplinary dance studies. *JoDE* is written for dance teachers, researchers, administrators, directors, choreographers, practitioners, and students in: postsecondary education, P-12 schools, independent sector schools and academies of dance, the professional dance world, professional dance training institutions, and community dance programs.

Submissions to *JoDE* fall into two categories: Research Articles and Articles for Students. For both, content must be original, geared towards issues not typically discussed in current texts, previously published chapters, or essays.

Research Articles stem from a variety of frameworks and methods, including but not limited to teaching as scholarship; empirical approaches, including qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods; humanities-based scholarship; literature reviews; practice-based research; and contextualized reflections on practice. References must be included to support assertions and quotations.

Research Articles should be between 1,500 and 8,000 words inclusive of references and endnotes. In general, the following guidelines should be used to determine the word count for a submission:

- Manuscripts that critically reflect on, contextualize, and share a dance educational practice will generally be between 1,500 and 3,500 words.
- Manuscripts that examine a dance educational practice in the context of disciplinary discourse (i.e., has a literature review) will generally be between 3,000 and 5,000 words.
- Manuscripts informed by social science-based, humanities-based, or arts-based research will generally be between 5,000 and 8,000 words.

Articles for Students are written for dance students, geared towards any one of the following populations: middle school, high school, independent sector, college, graduate students, adult students. Articles for Students should be between 1,000 and 3,000 words inclusive of references and endnotes. When submitting Articles for Students manuscripts, authors must indicate in their cover letter for which population(s) the article is written.

Articles can be submitted anytime as *JoDE* accepts submissions on a rolling basis. *JoDE* uses a double-anonymous peer review process, where neither the authors' nor the reviewers' identities are known to the other, to guide the development and selection of articles.

For more information about *JoDE's* manuscript requirements and submission process, please visit the journal's webpage: https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/ujod20.

For resources related to publishing with *JoDE*, please visit https://www.ndeo.org/Learn/Journals/Journal-of-Dance-Education.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

All manuscripts should be submitted online via the ScholarOne website.
http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/UJOD

www.tandfonline.com/UJOD

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National Dance Education Organization
Advancing Dance Education for All

Dance Education in Practice

Submit a Manuscript to the Journal For a Special Issue on Assessment in Dance

Manuscript Deadline: April 15, 2027
Special Issue Editor(s): Miriam Giguere, Drexel University

Assessment in Dance

We use assessment to evaluate student progress, document faculty accomplishment, determine if curriculum is appropriate, and decide how someone should be cast in choreography, along with a host of other practices. It is an essential tool of the dance educator. This special issue of Dance Education in Practice seeks articles pertaining to dance and assessment. Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Strategies for self-assessment
- Formative assessments: how to evaluate progress as dance is happening
- Summative assessments: documenting dance accomplishments at the end of the year
- Adapting the Danielson Framework for use in the dance classroom
- Evaluating student teacher readiness
- Peer assessment of faculty in post-secondary dance
- Standards based assessment for K-12 dancers
- Creating and using student crafted rubrics
- Evaluating independent studio success: when should a dancer move to another level?
- The role of AI in assessment and evaluation
- Assessment for casting: how to create auditions for most effective evaluation
- The politics of assessment: who gets to participate in evaluation?
- Assessing teaching success and instructor evaluation practices

We encourage authors to share their experiences with our readers. You do not need to be an experienced writer to submit—we mentor authors!

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

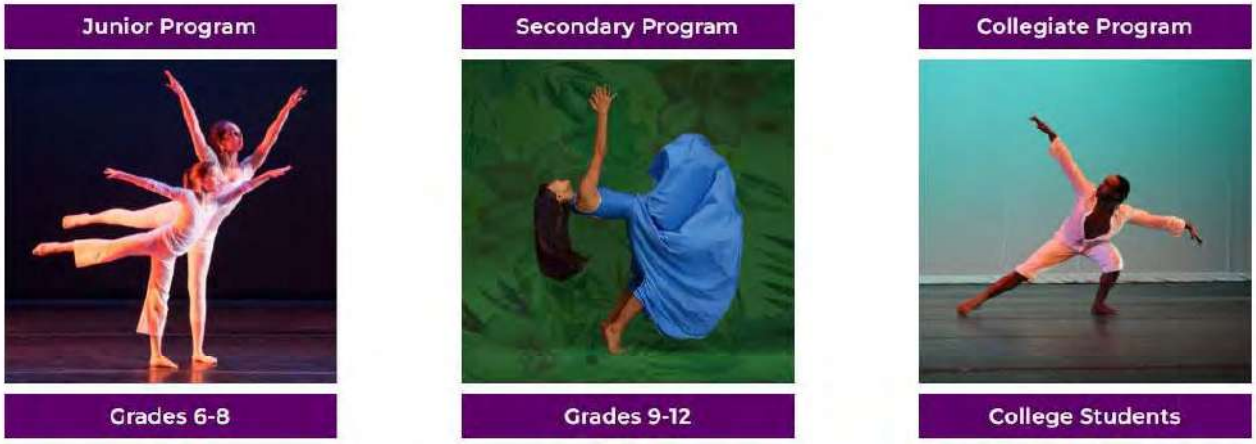
All manuscripts should be submitted online via the Scholar One website:

https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/udep20 For

more information, or with any questions, please contact: Miriam Giguere, PhD
Special Issue Editor
mgg22@drexel.edu

National Honor Society for Dance Arts

Establishing an NHSDA chapter in your school is one very important way that you can honor your students and help advance the field of dance education.



The National Honor Society for Dance Arts™ (NHSDA) recognizes outstanding artistic merit, leadership, and academic achievement in students studying dance in public and private schools in K-12 education, dance studios, community and arts organizations, and post-secondary education. NHSDA offers three levels of induction through a combination of earned points for dance activities, school GPA, and demonstration of teamwork and character:

The Junior Program for grades 6-8
The Secondary Program for grades 9-12
The Collegiate Program for students in college or university dance programs
www.ndeo.org/nhsda

"For students, the opportunity to be recognized as dance artists, for their higher standards academically and for the service provided to their community holds value as they are seen as a whole person. --- Gerri Barreras, Chapter Sponsor at Gulliver Preparatory

About NHSDA

"Being a part of the NHSDA has given me confidence as a dancer that I can be strong in academics and strong in performing arts as well. To gain a strong future in dance and as a dance professional, you need to have a good educational background to be able to run a business and make a career with dance. With NHSDA recognizing a strong work ethic and strong dance repertoire, it is a key factor on an application or in an interview to be recognized in both strong areas." ---

Anna-Katherine Risalvato, the AKademy of dance Inductee

The National Honor Society for Dance Arts™ (NHSDA) is a program of the National Dance Education Organization

NDEO's tax ID number is 52-2068986

Questions: email vbraja@ndeo.org

Donations and Support for NDEO

The National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) is a national non-profit dedicated to advancing dance education for all. We rely on the support of our members and broader community to sustain and expand our mission-driven programming.

Donations provide seed funding for projects that focus on dance in arts education & opportunities for expansion of our scholarship programs. While membership dues support our core operations, program revenue, grants, in-kind support, and charitable contributions provide the additional resources needed to deliver and grow our work.

Support the programs that matter most to you:

NDEO Works Fund - Supports NDEO's continued growth, and long-term financial stability.

#DanceEducation For All Fund - Expands access to NDEO's Professional Development Scholarship Program for dance educators.

Bonbright OPDI Fund - Supports the continued growth of the Online Professional Development Institute and scholarships to participate in OPDI courses

Thom Cobb Memorial Fund - Provides scholarships to a first- time attendee for the in-person NDEO National Conference

NEW ~ ****NDEO "ONE" Annual Endowment Campaign** —** Builds NDEO's endowment through the power of collective giving while strengthening long-term financial stability and creating opportunities for future generations of dance educators.

Head to **ndeo.org/give** to learn more and make a donation today!

Visit ndeo.org/GIVE or scan the QR code to schedule your recurring donation today!

