



4-24-2020

## Ursinus Dance Program: American College Dance Association Conference, March 4-7, 2020

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### Recommended Citation

Harris, Kevin II and Stitt, Chelsea, "Ursinus Dance Program: American College Dance Association Conference, March 4-7, 2020" (2020). *Theater and Dance Presentations*. 2.  
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Ursinus Dance  
Program  
American College  
Dance Association  
Conference  
March 4-7, 2020

ACDA Summary Statement:

Ten students and two faculty members of the UC Dance Program attended the Mid-Atlantic North regional conference of the American College Dance Association (ACDA) from March 4-7, 2020, at the University of Maryland, at College Park, MD. The mission statement of the organization is as follows:

“The American College Dance Association’s primary focus is to support and promote the wealth of talent and creativity that is prominent throughout college and university dance departments. ACDA’s sponsorship of regional conferences and the national dance festival provides the venue for students and faculty to engage in three days of performances, workshops, panels, and master classes taught by instructors from around the region and country. The conferences also provide the unique opportunity for students and faculty to have their dance works adjudicated by a panel of nationally recognized dance professionals in an open and constructive forum. The conferences are the primary means for college and university dance programs to perform outside their own academic setting and be exposed to the diversity of the national college dance world. Many conferences culminate with the presentation of pieces selected for their exemplary artistic quality.”

<https://www.acda.dance>

While at the conference, students performed in two dance works, participated in dance classes, and networked with dancers in peer institutions. A highlight of the event was the selection of Visiting Dance Professor Bailey Anderson’s dance, *Ridiculous Rigor: Past, Present, and Possible*, for the Gala performance.

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## Student Achievement in Research and Creativity Grants

### Travel Funding—Grant written by Kevin Harris, II

A total of 10 students (one senior, three juniors, two sophomores, and four first year students) – Erica Best, Mackenzie Buckley, Christina Foley, Kevin Harris, II, Elizabeth Kandler, Madison Moses, Adrianna Schwindt-Thompson, Chelsea Stitt, Emma Warnick, and Samantha Youngclaus attended the ACDA conference. Two dance faculty—Bailey Anderson and Karen Clemente accompanied the group.

Two dances were performed at the conference: 1) *Ridiculous Rigor: Past, Present, and Possible*, choreographed by Visiting Assistant Professor, Bailey Anderson with input from the dancers, and 2) *Don't Worry If You Know It*, choreographed by guest artist Jenn Rose. *Ridiculous Rigor: Past, Present, and Possible* was chosen for the Gala performance of the conference, after receiving excellent feedback.

#### Kevin's statement:

The grant I received assisted the Dance program students in paying for hotel accommodations as well as the ACDA registration fees. The dance work we performed was a postmodern piece created by Professor Bailey Anderson entitled *Ridiculous Rigor: Past, Present and Possible*. This was a work in which we explored the idea of rigor, what rigor could possibly be, and what rigor is in a modern day world. This experience overall has been something completely new and amazing for me. I have never been in one spot with so many dancers at one time and the connections I have made are unforgettable. I felt at ease knowing there was a large space filled with people who harbor the same passion as I and are willing to work hard to achieve their dreams. I personally believe that this is an experience that all dancers should be able to take part in at least once in their career. Every one of the teachers had something amazing to offer and treated all the students as equals; they gave us a safe space to express ourselves and I couldn't be more grateful for being able to take part in this experience. New ideas were presented at every corner of the way and my artistic ability was challenged with each class I took and with each style I learned. I encourage all dancers, or anyone for that matter, to take a chance and explore an event such as this to expand their artistic knowledge and develop an even deeper appreciation for the arts.

## Creative Project Funding—Grant written by Chelsea Stitt

### Chelsea's statement:

The grant I received was used to pay Jenn Rose, professional choreographer, to reconstruct her original choreography, *Don't Worry If You Know It*, created through a tap dance residency for the Dance Program in the Spring of 2019.

This experience was very exciting and fulfilling. Along with me, Madison Moses was the only other student who attended ACDA who was in the original cast for the piece. (Others in the 2019 original cast included: Jeniece Butts, Justine Cinalli, Karen Clemente, Alexandra Mastrangelo, Azanae Mahdi-Westcott, and Breanna Swartz). It took a lot of hard work and dedication to rework this piece with a new cast but it was so interesting to see the process of how each of the new dancers learned it in their own way. In the end, I think they were very proud of what they did because they absolutely should be. *Don't Worry If You Know It* is a very difficult piece; we had to reconstruct it in a small amount of time which made it a lot more difficult than in the original process. Then came the time in which we had to perform the piece at ACDA and we did a very good job. It was so heartwarming to see how much we bonded just because of this piece and I could see, during our final performance, that the new cast loved the piece just as much as I did. ACDA was unlike anything I have ever attended before. It allowed me to make connections with both professional and other, very successful student dancers. I also got to broaden my vocabulary of dance and get out of my comfort zone to learn a dance style that I have never done before, and I surprisingly had a lot of fun doing it. Along with the many classes that we could take, we also watched two, 2-hour dance concerts every day. This was also something that I have never done before, and I do not think I have seen this much dance in my life. I felt it was important to support and watch the other schools perform and it also allowed us to see what other colleges were currently working on. Also, as a cherry on top of the perfect sundae, the other dance that we took, *Ridiculous Rigor: Past, Present, and Possible*, made it into the ACDA Main Gala Concert at the end of the trip. This was such an honor to perform in front of all of the colleges and with the other colleges that made it into the Gala. Overall, I think that ACDA was an amazing experience and I would love to go again.

## ACDA Dance Classes

Throughout the ACDA conference, Ursinus students took master classes taught by professional dance artists and dance educators from regional college dance programs and networked with college dancers in peer institutions. Students took full advantage of the dance class offerings which included: Improvisation, Brazilian, Chinese, Irish, Contemporary Ballet and Modern, Somatics, Pilates, Alexander Technique, Contemporary House, Voice classes, Contemporary Partnering, Contact, Musical Theater, Tap, and Fusion classes.

### Student Responses:

“ACDA was an incredible experience. It provided countless opportunities to take classes from fascinating teachers and watch interesting dances from our fellow dance peers...Overall, it was such an enlightening experience and I’m grateful that I was able to attend.”

(Samantha Youngclaus)

“ACDA was an amazing opportunity for us to be able to share what Ursinus dancers have been working on and are proud of as well as being able to watch what other colleges and universities are proud to share. I was able to take unique classes that offered a broader experience to add to my college style.”

(Addie Schwindt-Thompson)

“...I was able to participate in so many classes in styles that are not available to me here at Ursinus, and some – like contact improv and contemporary partnering – that I’ve never been able to explore much at all. ACDA was an incredible experience.”

(Erica Best)

“...I met a lot of new people and got to experience several different dance styles through classes taught by professors from other colleges. Overall, I had a fantastic time and can’t wait to go again.”

(Mackenzie Buckley)

## ACDA Dance Classes (cont.)

While at the ACDA conference, Ursinus College dance faculty members, Bailey Anderson and Karen Clemente, taught master classes in their respective areas of expertise. Professor Anderson taught “Dance and Injury/Disability: A Conversation Around Pedagogy and Composition” and Dr. Clemente taught “Tap Improvisation.”

### Faculty Responses:

“One of the things that continues to strike me is the connection I saw between students across colleges and universities. In particular, our group developed a close relationship with the dancers from Old Dominion University; we warmed up together, shared our ways of calming down and focusing, and watched each other perform. ACDA creates a space for sharing knowledge about dance from leaders, but maybe more importantly, it is a place where we got to be with other dancers in our region. I am so grateful to Ursinus College for supporting these students in their work as performing scholars.” (Bailey Anderson)

“ACDA is a highlight of the spring semester. This spring, particularly, we look back fondly at the experience as one of the last times this academic year that we were able to dance together in person. While there, I was also able to share a new Tap Improvisation class that I developed especially for ACDA. The environment of ACDA encourages original work and risk taking for all. Overall, dancing with faculty members and students from the Mid-Atlantic North region was an enriching experience—a time for sharing and connection.”

(Karen Clemente)

## ACDA Adjudication Process and Informal Concerts

The ACDA conferences include adjudication concerts for optional participation by attending colleges. The adjudicators at each ACDA conference are professional dance artists and educators who are well known throughout the national and international dance community. Specifically, the adjudicators for the Mid-Atlantic North regional conference were: Gerald Casel, Peter Carpenter, and Jan Erkert. The adjudicators critique each piece anonymously, not knowing the names of the choreographers, performers, or schools. Students receive feedback from the adjudicators in an auditorium directly following the adjudication concert.

*Ridiculous Rigor: Past, Present, and Possible*, choreographed by faculty member Bailey Anderson with input from the dancers, was performed at an adjudication concert at ACDA. The dance work was chosen for the Gala performance of the conference, after receiving excellent feedback. Adjudicators commented that the dance was intelligent, asking great questions about rigor that begat more questions. They commented that the choreographer had a sense of humor and made smart choices in the multidisciplinary dance, as it questioned power structures that determine what rigor is or is not. All in all, the students were quite happy to perform and represent Ursinus College as one of 12 dances out of 48 possible for the culminating conference event—the Gala performance.

Informal dance concerts are also held at the conference. These concerts do not have an adjudication component. The dance, *Don't Worry If You Know It*, choreographed by guest artist Jenn Rose, was performed in an informal concert. The unique dance, using desk bells and rhythms played by the dancers, was well received by the audience.

## ACDA Adjudication Process and Informal Concerts (cont.)

### Student Responses:

“As a participant at ACDA, I felt there were lots of opportunities for me to participate in order to become a better dancer. The opportunity to perform in the adjudicated concert and the informal concert was an experience that lots of dancers can benefit from. Our participation in the adjudication concert allowed us to receive feedback on our piece from people outside of Ursinus, which, for me, allowed a growth in education that I have as a dancer... By participating in ACDA with the help of Ursinus, I had an overall positive and educational experience.”  
(Liz Kandler)

“I had a truly amazing time at ACDA. I loved taking classes and watching different schools perform their pieces. I was able to expand my horizons in the collegiate dance world. I think my favorite part was being able to get even closer to my fellow dancers during this experience. A close second was being able to perform *Rigor* during the Gala and having some of my friends and family come and watch.”  
(Emma Warnick)

“This was my first time attending ACDA and it was truly an unforgettable experience. I had such an amazing time taking classes and performing in the showcases. It was so surreal to perform *Rigor* both in our adjudicated show and at the Gala. We were able to show other collegiate programs what Ursinus has been working on. It was also a great opportunity to meet other dancers and watch an abundance of amazing dances.”  
(Chrissy Foley)

“I think that ACDA gave me a unique and unforgettable opportunity to connect with other dancers and experience dance in a new and exciting way. I loved seeing how people from all over are doing, teaching, and communicating about dance. This conference reaffirmed my belief that dance connects people from all walks of life and I am so grateful to have been a part of the community we built there.”  
(Madi Moses)