

What students need to know about college and university dance programs

University at Buffalo (SUNY)



Students benefit from a faculty that comes from eclectic professional backgrounds, steeped in traditional dance forms. BELOW: Guest-artist and faculty choreography highlights students in multiple concerts each year.

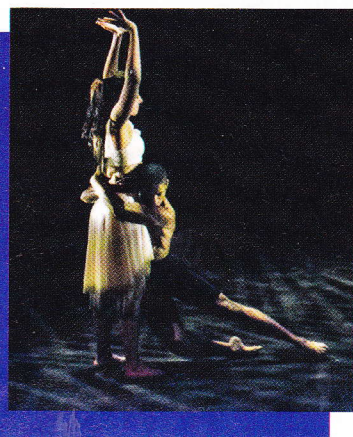
The University at Buffalo (UB), the flagship institution in the State University of New York (SUNY) system, has 20,000 undergraduates in 100 programs. Within this bustling research university is the Department of Theatre & Dance, dedicated to the development of the next generation of theater and dance artists.

UB offers two dance degrees. The BA focuses on educating and training dance teachers, and the BFA on preparing dancers for careers in performance and choreography.

Although UB is sizable, the dance program feels intimate. Twenty-eight dance majors are accepted each year. Classes for majors are closed to the general student body, keeping class sizes at industry standard and the focus on the dance majors' growth and development. This format provides students with an unusual scenario—a nurturing conservatory setting within a large and diverse research institution.

UB dancers have access to big school perks such as Division 1 athletics, state-of-the-art facilities, and excellence in groundbreaking research. Extensive choices are available for majors, courses, teachers, and classes, and many dance students double-major (psychology, anthro-

pology, exercise science, business, and education are common choices) or add a minor or certificate. UB's Honors College permits motivated students to learn in smaller groups from renowned professors. The Finish in 4 initiative supports students in successfully completing their degrees in four years. (Last fall *U.S. News and World Report* ranked UB first among public universities nationwide for students graduating with the "least debt.")



The motto of the dance program (founded by Linda Swinich in 1974) is "Versatility Matters"; UB therefore offers students a curriculum that is both in-depth and broad-ranging, giving equal emphasis and respect to ballet, modern, jazz, and tap. The program is also distinctive for its offerings

Photos by Jim Bush

in comparative jazz styles and techniques. Students can concentrate on performance, choreography, or preparation for teaching as a field of study, or customize their degree programs with a creative track or concentration.

Opportunities include an in-house partnership with the Buffalo-based company LehrerDance; the Healthy Dancer Initiative, offering free weekly massage therapy; Friday Forums, master classes on topics such as hip-hop, myofascial release, or aerial arts; and the summer Dance Masters of America Teachers Training School, hosted at UB's Center for the Arts.

The dance faculty's eclectic professional backgrounds, steeped in traditional dance forms, enrich UB's program and reflect the dance pulse of the 21st century. Residencies with nationally recognized artists (Taylor 2, Urban Bush Women, Jump Rhythm Jazz Project, ABT Studio Company, Doug Varone) and companies and artists from abroad (South Africa's Eager Artists, India's Jagdish Gangani, South Korea's In-Young Sohn) and master classes (David Parsons, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Rennie Harris, Suzanne Farrell, Robert L. Reed) enhance the educational process and provide networking opportunities for graduating students.

For more information, visit UB Dance Program on Facebook or theatredance.buffalo.edu.

—Kerry Ring and Jeanne Fornarola

Name of program: University at Buffalo Department of Theatre & Dance

Year founded: 1974

Department philosophy: "Versatility Matters." The program offers an in-depth, broad-ranging curriculum that gives equal emphasis and respect to ballet, modern, jazz, and tap.

Entrance audition required: Yes; live preferred, video accepted

Degrees available: BA and BFA in dance

Number of students in department, 2013–2014: 90; BFA/BA: 30/60; men/women: 10/80; in-state/out-of-state: 60/30

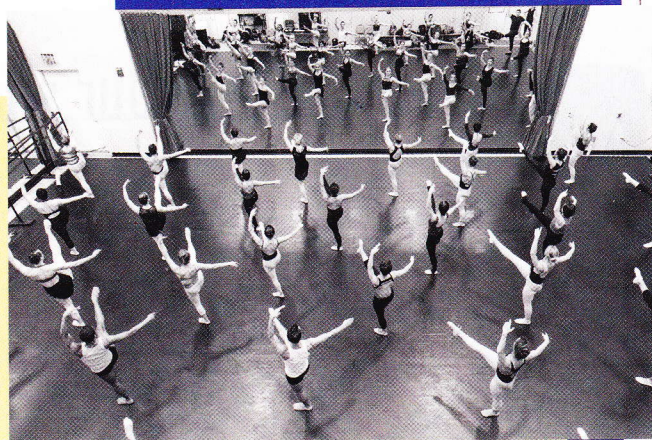
Ratio of students to faculty: 10:1

Technique classes offered: Ballet, jazz, modern, tap, partnering, improvisation

Additional classes offered: Pedagogy, choreography, dance history, Laban Movement Analysis, applied kinesiology for dancers, creative movement, Visual Imagination, basic acting, social dance, mind-body integration, technical theater (costume, lighting, set design, stage management), research in dance, aerial arts

Faculty: Jeanne Fornarola (program director), Thomas Ralabate, Melanie Aceto, Anne Burnidge, Tressa Gorman Crehan, Kerry Ring, Joyce Miller Lichtenberger, Shelley Hain, Tracy Navarro, Michael Lambert (adjunct); Jon Lehrer (guest)


Performance opportunities: Zodiaque Dance Company, Zodiaque Dance Ensemble, Emerging Choreographers showcase, annual Digital Poetry and Dance production,



UB dancers start the day with a ballet class.

student-run Dancers' Workshop, American College Dance Association festivals, interdisciplinary and outreach-based performances in Buffalo

Additional opportunities available: Credit internships Arts in Healthcare, Bridging Communities Through Dance, DanceFit Marketing, Moving Miracles; certificate training in Ultra Barre and Pilates; LehrerDance observerships for senior majors; student-designed study-abroad experiences

Notable alumni: Roberto Villanueva (BalaSole), Lindsay (Craven) Guarino (co-editor of *Jazz Dance: A History of the Roots and Branches*), Jessica Wolfrum (River North Dance Chicago), Jenny Laroche (TV's *Smash*, Radio City Rockettes), Jon Lehrer (LehrerDance) 



Students (here in Jon Lehrer's *Murmur*) benefit from UB's partnership with Buffalo-based LehrerDance.

College and university dance departments are welcome to submit profiles. Email colleges@dancestudiolife.com for more information.

Top photo by Paul Hokanson; bottom photo by Jim Bush