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Dance Grows as Field of Academic Study within CCCU



D.J. Lee, Eastern University

Julianna (Snyder) Mackie ('03) and Kelli Fletcher ('04) perform at Eastern University's, "Fabulous 15: Celebrating 15 Years of Dance at Eastern."

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Universities go far beyond that with a collective 350 different undergraduate majors, including the increasingly popular field of study, dance.

While not every CCCU school offers classes in dance, CCCU students enrolled in the Council's BestSemester program the Australia Studies Centre are able to study dance at Wesley Institute, home to the ASC and Australia's premier Christian college of the arts and theology.

"The ASC students who come for one semester to study at the Wesley Institute are provided with an amazing opportunity to study in an environment that is unique in Christian higher education," says Kimberly Spragg, ASC program director. "Wesley Institute combines intense academic study of and training in the arts (drama, dance, graphic design, music) with ministry and theological training. The Institute's motto, taken from St. Francis of Assisi, speaks clearly of the

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mission, which is to 'preach the gospel, if necessary, use words.' ASC students leave their semester and Wesley Institute students leave their three years of study with a deep understanding of this concept and with finely honed tools and skills with which they can live this vision."

Six graduates Wesley's undergraduate degree program have been offered places with Dance Ad Deum beginning in September 2006. Based in Houston, Texas, Ad Deum (Unto God) is a full-time professional contemporary-modern dance company which tours domestically and internationally.

Many CCCU students may earn a degree or a complete a minor in dance at their home institutions. **Anderson University** (IN) has new dance minor and has recently converted part of the new Kardatzke Wellness Center into a Dance Studio for this academic program. Courses include: four levels of Ballet, Modern and Jazz; three levels of Tap; Choreography I and II; as well as Dance History, Period Dance Forms, World Dance Forms and Improvisation/Composition.

Belhaven College (MS) offers a Bachelor of Arts, a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a minor in dance. The mission of the dance department is to prepare students spiritually, technically, academically, artistically to move into the world of dance and affiliated careers in adherence with the mission of the college. *Ballet Magnificat!* and the Belhaven College dance department have a significant shared history. Today, both programs continue to develop in unique and diverse ways while supporting each other in their common purpose to glorify God in dance. The Department of Dance is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD).

Calvin College (MI) has a dance minor, including courses such as Anatomical Kinesiology, Dance History, Dance in World Culture, Dance Composition and Performance as well as technique courses in modern, ballet, jazz, tap and sacred dance. "[The Dance in World Culture] course is unique to Calvin," says dance professor Ellen Van'tHof. "It looks at the role and power of dance to reflect community, societal and religious values within culture and also the role of dance within the arts of diverse cultures." Van'tHof earned \$6,000 from the Alaska Humanities Forum and \$6,000 from Alaska's CIRI Foundation for a documentary film she plans to produce called "Finding

Their Own Dance: Reawakening the Alutiiq Arts." The Dance Program of **Eastern University** (PA) provides dance education in a Christian setting, enabling students to integrate their faith with the discipline of dance through course work and performance production. The program offers an academically rigorous curriculum to students who are interested in careers in dance or dance related fields. The course work and community environment engage the individual on physical, intellectual, social, and emotional levels anchored in Christian spirituality--shaping a dance professional.

"The arts are crucial in the human experience; contextualizing that reality is important in the Christian university, wherein the arts have been marginalized," says Karen Clemente, director of Eastern's dance program. "This is particularly true regarding the discipline of dance, often rejected in Christian circles that have supported the spirituality of a mind/body split. To make art is to participate in a creative act, exploring our human condition and commenting on what it means to be on a faith journey."

The Bachelor of Arts in Dance program at **Palm Beach Atlantic University** (FL) recently was granted \$10,000 to support the reconstruction of Jose Limon's "There is a Time," which will be preformed by the PBA Dance Ensemble on November 21 at the Raymond F. Kravis Center for Performing Arts in West Palm Beach. Palm Beach Atlantic was one of only 10 colleges in the country that was awarded grants through the American Masterpieces: Dance-College Component, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts, which is administered by the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) and Dance/USA. The program is designed to get American masterpieces performed and "keep the works alive," according to Klein, who assisted the students in the writing the grant.

Westmont College (CA) offers a dance track within its theatre major. Opportunities to perform are open to dancers by auditions. The student company, The Westmont Windancers, performs with the Sacred Dance Guild, the Santa Barbara Dance Alliance, and in various campus and off-campus concerts and recitals. Over the course of four years, students will study Sacred Dance, Dance History and Philosophy, Choreography and Composition, Dance Theory and Technique (in Education), Dance for Musical Theatre, and Movement for Actors. Technique classes include Ballet, Modern, Jazz, Sacred, and Ethnic Dance.

Whitworth College (WA) offers a dance minor within its theater major. The dance program includes courses and performance opportunities in musical theatre dance, ballet, ballroom, jazz and sacred dance. An innovative, interdisciplinary course in ministry, movement and the arts encourages students to explore dance and other artistic expressions as worship. Whitworth's art, music, theatre and dance programs are widely recognized for their excellence in preparing students for successful careers and meaningful lives and for entertaining and challenging audiences through their acclaimed exhibitions and performances. An outstanding faculty, active in their own creative disciplines and dedicated to the art of teaching, work closely with nearly 200 students majoring in the arts and with hundreds more who enroll in their courses and participate in productions, concerts, exhibits, worship services and other programs at the college.

Several other CCCU institutions not offering full academic programs in dance support the study of dance through student-led groups and courses. For instance, **Northwestern College** (IA) has an annual student-led dance concert that has become one of the most popular events on campus. The concert, RUSH, began in the spring of 2004 as a one-night production featuring nine dancers performing in six numbers. This fall's RUSH was a five-show production featuring 14 numbers and involving nearly one-tenth of the students on campus. In fact, RUSH has grown so large that tickets sell out within a couple of days. The show includes hip-hop, salsa, lyrical, tap, country, ballet, modern dance and more.

Messiah College (PA) maintains Acclamation Dance Ministry to promote creative expression through the art of liturgical and expressive dance, and to provide an alternative language for the worship of Jesus Christ, including tap, jazz, ballet and modern dance.

Seattle Pacific University (WA) includes dance in its course offerings, such as Introduction to Dance, Dance Techniques: Modern & Jazz and Social Dance Techniques.

The Council for Christian Colleges & Universities is a higher education association of 180 intentionally Christ-centered institutions around the world. There are now 105 member campuses in North America and all are fully-accredited, comprehensive colleges and universities with curricula rooted in the arts and sciences. In addition, 75 affiliate campuses from 24

countries are part of the CCCU. The Council's mission is to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help its institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth.

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