

Progress Update (Past Two Years) - Academic Affairs

1. Provide an update on your program or department's progress on your last objectives or action plans:

Progress Update Past Action Plans

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What type of program review did you last submit?

- Old annual
- Old six-year
- PU
- CPR

What is the status of your last program review action plan/objective?

- Completed
- In Progress
- No Longer Pursuing

Discuss the progress made on the goals in your action plan(s) (if last program review was a PU or CPR) or annual objective(s) (if last program review was an annual or old six-year).

The trends below were identified in our last 6-year program review report (2020-21, section G2, Future Trends, Planning, Recommendations) as things that could potentially impact our program. Besides identifying the trends below we also noted our response to changes we anticipate for the program in 5 and 10 years and how the program is planning for these changes.

Each heading below is followed by a response noting where we stand currently in relation to the trend identified.

Commercial Dance:

Los Angeles is the center of commercial entertainment and employment. Trends in popular culture over the past several decades indicate continued interest in commercial dance forms. These dance forms include jazz dance, contemporary and street dance styles (hip-hop, break dance, house, etc.). Street dance forms have saturated the commercial market from video dance, concert tours of popular musical artists, and mainstream television programming. Currently, there are very few certificate or degree programs in commercial/street dance forms. We foresee the need to offer a certificate in commercial dance to best serve the demand for training in these forms. We believe this will attract students and position the SMC Dance Department as leaders in this category.

Response:

Development of a Commercial Dance Certificate of Achievement (Fall 2023). SMC is the only community college in the Greater LA area that offers a Commercial Dance Certificate of Achievement which was created in support of the Dance Department's efforts to equitize our curriculum and underscore the cultural and historical significance and professional relevance of Afro-diasporic dance techniques such as hip hop, jazz, and tap. The certificate provides specialized training to serve students who would benefit from more technical and artistic training before pursuing employment in the commercial dance industry.

We will continue to innovate and diversify our course offerings to meet our student's needs. To that end, we are currently working toward offering a second associate's degree; an AS in Commercial Dance (currently pending LARC approval). Los Angeles is the epicenter of the commercial dance industry, and a large percentage of SMC Dance students intend to pursue careers within this industry as performers, choreographers, producers, artistic directors, dance filmmakers, educators, private studio owners, talent agents, company managers, rehearsal directors, stage and production managers, digital content creators, marketing personnel, and arts administrators. The A.S. in Commercial Dance would build direct pathways between SMC and the commercial dance industry within Los Angeles and beyond through guest artist

workshops and choreographic residencies, in-house auditions for various employment opportunities, Q&As with industry leaders, field trips to local dance performances and company rehearsals, and internships with dance companies and arts organizations.

For most AA/BA/BFA degrees in Dance, Eurocentric dance forms ballet and modern remain the required technique courses, while Afro-diasporic dance forms remain elective courses. This degree would support and uplift students specializing in Afro-diasporic dance forms as these are the primary dance styles utilized in commercial dance jobs. We believe that prioritizing these forms will help close equity gaps, improve enrollment and retention, and more accurately reflect the cultural diversity of the student population within the Dance Department and the college at large.

We envision our department becoming a hub for commercial dance that will attract a larger student population locally, nationally, and internationally. An A.S. in Commercial Dance would also distinguish SMC as the only community college offering an AS in Commercial Dance in Southern California and would bolster SMC Dance Department's reputation as a high caliber, comprehensive training program that offers competitive inroads to the professional dance and entertainment industry.

Dance & Technology:

While no one could have foreseen the move to an exclusively remote learning environment, dance and digital media (including dance on film, live-streaming, dance and social media) has been a burgeoning area of growth in the dance world for over a decade. Now more than ever, technology is a great enabler of arts creation and participation. Increasingly, four year institutions are requiring some form of dance and digital media study for undergraduates. Our Department sees this as a potential area for new class offerings and collaboration with other SMC Departments (particularly Communication and Media Studies and Design Technology).

Response:

- We revised Dance 63, (the final course in our choreography sequence) into a special topics in choreography course. The course has been offered once since the revision with a focus on dance and film (Fall 2023). The course will be offered again in Spring 2026;
- In April 2024 the SMC Dance Department hosted renowned Scotland based Screendance artist Katrina McPherson for a two day workshop in collaboration with Dance Camera West that was open to our students as well as the community-at-large. We continue to host various dance on film guest teachers post pandemic;
- During the Spring 2025 semester, faculty member Vanessa Van Wormer took sabbatical with the focus of her research on digital content in relation to ballet. Professor Van Wormer will use her research to bolster our screendance initiatives.

International Collaboration:

Our program seeks to cultivate international collaboration. This is spurred by several factors including an above average number of international students enrolled in our courses compared to the college as a whole, international research being undertaken by our faculty and supported by a Chairs of Excellence grant and continued international touring and outreach by Dance Department performing ensembles. Possibilities for continued outreach include a teacher exchange and increased recruitment activity for international student populations. Initiatives such as these are more viable since the onset of the pandemic and normalization of remote outreach/work activities.

Response:

- Meeting with an International Student Center counselor to discuss specific recruitment strategies for international students who want to study dance in the US;
- Continued collaboration with the Florence Italy Dance Festival in which our students receive partial scholarship to attend the festival and our faculty serve as guest teachers at the festival;
- The Dance Department hosted renowned Scotland based Screendance artist Katrina McPherson for a two day workshop in collaboration with Dance Camera West (April, 2024);

- Plans are in development for international travel to dance festivals in Indonesia and South America.

Recruitment:

As noted in this report, trends in college enrollment are declining and will continue to decline over the next decade. To that end, we must continue to be creative and innovative in the ways in which we reach and recruit students. Notably, studies show that college students in the near future will be predominately minority students. Latinx and Asian Pacific Islander students will most likely make up the majority of future high school graduates. We must be diligent and committed to ongoing equity-related training and always center our students in all planning and decision making.

Response:

We have implemented the following strategies to increase recruitment/enrollment, improve student success rates, increase completion rates, and create a culture of care:

- Conduct yearly high school dance days every Spring semester in which we invite approximately 75 students from various area high schools to spend a day at the SMC Dance Department;
- Conduct master classes every Fall semester at various area high schools;
- Create a more student-centric environment through the formation of a Student Advisory Council as well as monthly community circle events that are facilitated by counselors from the Center for Wellness & Wellbeing;
- To date, eight of our faculty members (over half our total faculty) have participated in the Equitizing Gateway Courses Program. This program has been instrumental in embedding equity-centered practices in our departmental culture.
- Hired a student worker to specifically handle the department's social media presence.

Enrollment in dance department courses has steadily increased since coming back from the pandemic. Spring 2025 saw our strongest enrollment period post-Covid with fill rates at 92.42% compared to 85.41% college wide. If enrollment trends continue in this manner, we hope to build back our world dance course offerings which have in the past made our program unique in the nation. All world dance course offerings were cut due to low enrollment post-pandemic and cuts in WTH. To date we have successfully reintroduced Salsa dance and will reintroduce Mexican dance in the Fall of 2025.

Increase Pathways to Degree:

The Department will continue to investigate ways in which attainment of the AA degree in dance can be accessible and equitable for all of our students. This includes pathways to degree that don't solely center Western/Eurocentric dance disciplines.

We have the opportunity to position ourselves at the forefront of two year institutions in areas such as Commercial Dance and Dance and Technology while providing equitable pathways to success and degree completion. We want to increase our reputation as the top choice for students seeking to study dance while receiving a college education in Southern California. While we believe that programs such as commercial dance and dance and technology will be a draw to students we do not forget that the ultimate reason students attend SMC is because of our outstanding faculty and the high quality instruction they receive. We will continue to recruit the best artists and educators possible, examine our curriculum, program and procedures, and evolve as the industry demands.

Response:

See above "Commercial Dance" and "Dance and Technology"

2. Considering your program's past plans and the developments over the past two years, what challenges and concerns need to be addressed in the next two-year review period?

Through the self-evaluation process including examination of enrollment trends and student equity gaps, we recognize the need for the following:

- Maintain upward enrollment trends to be able to gain back WTH lost due to the pandemic and lower enrollment post pandemic. Additional hours can be used to reintroduce world dance course offerings.
- Implement ongoing *dance-specific* equity-based training for our faculty to reduce and eliminate equity gaps for our marginalized students;
- Develop curricular programming and pathways to degree that will attract new students and decentralize Western/Eurocentric disciplines;
- Ensure funding streams to support dance and technology initiatives and guest artists that support our mission and help bolster enrollment.
- Respond to changing trends in social media and communications to maintain robust and innovative recruitment measures.

3. Broadly discuss the most critical resources you anticipate needing to effectively implement the goals in your program's action plan in the next review period. If applicable, your answers here should inform the specific line item requests in your future Annual Resource Requests (ARR).

Dance and Technology, Facilities, and International Collaboration:

The dance department moved into beautiful new studios in February 2017. Unfortunately, the sound systems installed in the studios are inadequate and have continuously malfunctioned since day one. We are constantly relying on media services to create patch work solutions to a problem that shouldn't have existed in the first place. We need new sound systems installed in all of our studios.

There is an anticipated need for increased technological resources to support Dance and Technology programming and International Collaboration. We anticipate increased need for film equipment (cameras, lighting equipment, audio) and editing equipment and software as we prepare our students to meet career demands in an industry that is relying more and more heavily on digital content. These technology resources are becoming standard practice in the dance departments of many institutions of higher learning.

This form is completed and ready for acceptance.