National Association of Schools of Dance
Visitors’ Report

University of Alabama
Department of Theatre and Dance
H5 Rowand-Johnson Hall
Box 870239
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487 – 9239

On Campus Visit: January 27 – 29, 2014
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Degree for which renewal of Final Approval for Listing is sought:
Bachelor of Arts – 4 years: Dance
Disclaimer

The following report and any statements therein regarding compliance with NASD accreditation standards represent only the considered opinion of the visitors at the time of the visit. Definitive evaluation of compliance and the accreditation decision will be made by the Commission on Accreditation following a complete review of the application including the Self-Study, the Visitors’ Report, and any Optional Response to the Visitors’ Report submitted by the institution.

Acknowledgements

The visiting evaluators thank the provost, dean, dance executive, faculty, staff, and students of the dance unit for providing a well-organized on-site itinerary, and positive environment for the visit. Special thanks goes to Rita Snyder and her husband for transporting the visiting team to the airport during a major winter storm. We thank the executive officers, staff/faculty members, and students of the dance unit, the Provost, the Dean for their interest in accreditation matters and their high level of engagement in the accreditation review process. Finally, University of Alabama is most fortunate to have Dance Executive, Cornelius Carter leading the dance unit into the future along with Associate Professors Rita Snyder and Sarah Barry, who offer excellent leadership and strong administrative support to the program. The visiting evaluators recognize their combined intellectual artistry, years of leadership, and current roles in the success of the dance unit and the quality of Alabama’s arts education.

“The University of Alabama is a public university that is dedicated to advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of the State through quality programs of teaching, research, and service.” (Self-Study, pp. 1-2) Special thanks to William Teague, Chair of the Department of Theater and Dance, Joe Benson, Interim Provost, and Robert Olin, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, whose commitment to the dance program and the accreditation process was apparent, and to their continued views of the arts as critical for the prepared 21st century citizen. The College of Arts and Sciences “…provides the liberal arts foundation necessary to the education of all University of Alabama students. As the state’s largest liberal arts college, the CAS is central to the cultural, intellectual, and social life on campus ad in the community, state and region.” (Self-Study p. 39)

The visitors observed ballet and jazz technique classes, history, anatomy and choreography classes and rehearsals. Due to a winter storm that shut down the university we were unable to observe modern classes, however we observed videos of modern classes. We were also unable to observe rehearsals on the second day. However we observed videos of performances of both Dance Alabama and Alabama Repertory Dance Theater. Sufficient work and performances were provided.

A. Purposes

The mission of the University of Alabama, Department of Theatre and Dance Program and the objectives of the Dance Program are listed in the Self-Study. (Self-Study p. 1) The collective missions emphasize appreciation of the arts, development of artistic skills and outreach to the community through performances.

While it is not explicitly stated in the mission, the dance program has a conservatory approach to technique within a liberal arts degree, placing a high value on technical training and performance. “As professional performers and choreographers, the Dance Faculty seeks to identify dance students who can best succeed in the field. The requires concentration in achieving the highest standards of
technique and, at the same time, establishing a creative envelope in which to nurture emerging choreographers and teachers." (Self-Study p. 2)

The emphasis on technique and performance clearly guides and influences decision-making, analysis, and planning regarding curricular offerings, operational matters, and resources. Faculty members are all established performers and teachers. 30% of the requirements are primarily in technical area out of 42.5% of the total dance curriculum within the BA. (Self-Study p. 18) In addition, students noted that faculty encourages students to take more technique class on an audit basis. The Self-Study states that there is equal emphasis in the achievement of three traditional styles – classical ballet, traditional modern dance and jazz - and there are advanced levels in all three traditions. However, the visitors observed a higher emphasis on ballet in both training and abilities. The ballet classes meet MWF and Modern/Jazz on Tuesday/Thursday. Currently 50% of the tenure track have primary expertise in ballet. There is a high degree of performance activities and links to professional training grounds such as ABT Summer Intensive, The PULSE, and Broadway Dance Center that support the technical and performance growth of students. Although performance is highly valued, performance credit is not given in the curriculum.

With the conservatory approach to technique and encouragement to audit technique this program clearly emphasizes technique. The purpose of the dance unit as stated in the Self-Study appears to be parallel and complementary to the mission, goals and objectives of the department and university.

The institution appears to meet the operational standards in regard to purpose.

B. Size and Scope

"The Dance Program has four full-time faculty, one adjunct, one technical supervisor, and one clerical staff. Additionally there is one full-time Theatre Program faculty with primary duties for dance and movement in the Musical Theatre program." (Self-Study p 3-4) Two tenure-track position will be filled by August 2014 (at this time they will lose the adjunct position). (Self-Study p 8) There are approximately 140 dance majors in this program (Self-Study pp. 3), with a student/faculty ratio at 18/1 (Self-Study p. 8).

Currently, the dance unit has a minimum number of faculty to cover the size and scope of the programs offered. The faculty members seemed over burdened keeping pace with the program. Processes appear to be in place to correct this issue and the institution is currently undergoing a search for two tenure faculty members. The on-site visitors confirmed this information with the Chair, Dean and Provost. The institution is encouraged to provide any additional information regarding this search in its Optional Response. The demographics of the dance full-time faculty are diverse and representative of student demographics.

The visitors’ observed 7 classes in technique in which the average size was 30. The upper level class had only 7 students. (See Section Q below). Composition, history and anatomy averaged 12-30. In all cases the studios and classrooms appeared to be adequate for the number of students. The on-site evaluators observed sufficient advanced courses appropriate to the BA.

There are 3 studios (Clark Hall, 2 in Bryant), and a 623 seat proscenium theater in Morgan Hall that is utilized for classes, and one classroom in Rowand Johnson that is used for dance history and anatomy courses. (Self Study, pp. 293-299). Although the size of the program seems adequate, it appears to be outgrowing the limited studio space. The limitations of space appear to be affecting level placement, scheduling, and overall operations. The institution has hired an architecture firm to develop plans for
a new theater and dance studios. The on-site visitors discussed the plans with the Chair, Dean and Provost and viewed architectural drawings of the new theater and studios. The institution is encouraged to submit any additional information regarding these plans with its Optional Response.

Although the size of the program is at a limit, the institution is able to provide a majority of students with performance opportunities. In 2012-13, “Of 152 students, 137 (90%) had a performance opportunity during the year and 51 of 59 freshmen (86%) performed in a program sponsored event.” (Self-Study p. 25) In the interview with students, the students confirmed that they have adequate opportunities to perform.

The institution appears to meet the threshold operational standards in relation to size and scope.

C. Finances

Although resources in terms of personnel and space are at a critical juncture, there appears to be adequate funding for delivering the program. The unit is commended for their entrepreneurial efforts. They have been able to generate significant earned income because of programming that has popular appeal. Successful audience development and subsequent box office income (approximately $65,000/year) and profits from the ABT Summer Intensive (approximately $40,000/year) have been instrumental to this success.

The college funds daily operational needs, space, and personnel. “This is a stable source of income, though it has altered little despite program growth.” (Self-Study p. 4) “The budget from the prior year carries over and annual adjustments are made based on needs and projects for that academic year.” (Self-Study p. 5) The unit utilizes the earned income from Box office and ABT intensive to fund scholarships and guest artists. Production budgets come from Box office. This was confirmed in discussions with the Chair and Director.

The Chair and Director of the Dance Program have an informal relationship in terms of developing the budget and setting priorities. The Chair noted that the Director has never submitted a formal budget, yet it appears that despite this lack of formality, the unit is fiscally responsible. The Chair, faculty and Director all reported that as funds are needed for dance, they have always been fulfilled. (See Section Q below for more information).

Fundraising is listed as $36, 900 in FY 12 (Self-Study p. 127) Activities include providing a donation form as part of performances, a direct mail campaign, and a college event every five years. Due to limited faculty/teaching loads, unless significant gains, the unit seems unable to take on additional fundraising activities at this time. (Self-Study, p. 5)

The institution publishes all regulations and policies concerning tuition, fees, and other charges; with a published, clear tuition refund policy that is equitable to both the institution and the student.

The institution appears to meet the threshold operational standards in relation to finances.

D. Governance and Administration

Overall Effectiveness -The Dance program operates within the administrative structures of the Department of Theatre and Dance and College of Arts and Sciences, following the college and departmental guidelines. (Self-Study p. 5) There are no formal By-Laws for the department or college,
Due to the stable leadership over the last 10 years there appears to be continuity and stability in governance and administrative systems.

The faculty reported that the Dance Executive maintains an open door policy of communication and is readily available for conferences and discussions with faculty, staff, students, and parents. The Dance Executive relies heavily on two faculty members to share administrative duties of the dance program, which include the day-to-day operations of scheduling, faculty/staff management and development, budget oversight, recruitment, admissions, planning/allocation of resources, facilities management, and major reports such as the NASD self-study. The DE oversees assessment of faculty, students, and the overall program. There is evidence that NASD standards for this position are being met.

**Policy Making** - "Administrative and educational policies of the dance unit are determined by the faculty for the most part. The faculty have the freedom and ability to adapt curriculum or course offerings based on program needs and mission and have full control over the artistic process and product for all dance productions." *(Self-Study, p. 5, 6)* The on-site visitors observed this to be accurate. The faculty members are highly involved in the day-to-day operations, planning the development of curriculum.

There are bi-weekly Faculty meetings and the visitors confirmed that they "...engage in semi-annual long form ‘retreat like’ faculty meetings at the beginning of each semester, part of which includes evaluation and planning." *(Self-Study p. 33)*

**Dance Executive Load and Responsibilities** - The duties of the position are clearly delineated and understood by the Dance Executive. He carries a standard 12-hour teaching load per semester, which is reduced for administrative duties and creative activity. *(Self-Study p. 189)* The load appears to be manageable.

The Dance Executive duties include teaching, creative work (described as choreography for ARDT and concert directing), community service, and administration (advocacy, faculty development, visioning, administration and communication with students). *(Self-Study p. 189)*

**Communications** - It appears that communications throughout the dance unit appears to be productive and healthy but informal. The administrators, faculty and staff appear to have built a trusting relationship and operate well without formal rules or policies. Communication between the Chair and DE is also healthy, productive and informal. The Dance Executive is commended for advocacy with upper administration. It is clear that the upper administration knows and respects the program. Communications as a whole appear to be effective and meet standards.

The institution appears to meet the threshold standards in regard to Governance and Administration.

**E. Faculty and Staff**

In the visitors meeting with students, they reported that they are receiving both excellent training and advising from faculty. A review of vitae indicates a well-prepared and highly qualified faculty with an appropriate mixture of professional credentials and academic qualifications to support the unit’s mission.

All tenure track faculty members have MFA degrees and significant professional experiences that match the curricular offerings." *(Self-Study, p. 7)*. The number of faculty appears to meet minimum threshold standards for the accomplishment of the mission due to the size of the student body. Student
faculty ratio is 18/1. (Self-Study page 8.) Present balance is not sustainable for the maintenance and ongoing development of this program. The two new tenure track faculty are critical to long-term stability. The distribution of faculty expertise in relation to purposes, curricular offerings and size and scope appears to be within NASD Standards.

Faculty morale in terms of inter-departmental communication appears to be strong and healthy. However, faculty are concerned about workload issues, which has affected their ability to conduct research and stay current in the field.

It seems that faculty cannot sustain current workloads without harm to their wellbeing, research portfolios, service/shared governance and/or administrative responsibilities. The load is 12 credits per semester with release time provided for administrative or creative/research activity. “Faculty often teach an over-load each semester, with no additional pay, in order to meet student demands. In order to help student gain performance experience, faculty often choreograph for multiple concerts each semester, while only gaining release time for one.” (Self-Study. P. 8). The two new tenure track positions are expected to restore the appropriate balance of workload.

Sabbaticals can be applied for and granted every seven-years. There are numerous university grants and programs that support faculty development. Because of high teaching loads, it appears that the tenure faculty members are unable to accomplish substantial professional work outside the university setting. Most of their collective portfolio shows significant activity at the local level, but not at the national or international level. However, they have excelled in teaching (Self-Study p.247-278). Faculty are concerned about professional development, which they hope will be more possible with the new hires.

There are clear departmental and institutional guidelines for tenure and promotion, and all faculty members appear to be aware of their rights and responsibilities for tenure and promotion.

The institution has a full-time staff position for Technical Supervisor who appears able to handle all production responsibilities. There is a full-time faculty member and associate professor who oversees the costumes for the Department of Theater and Dance. There is a shop manager, 9 graduate assistantships, 5 Undergraduate scholarship students who work on the costumes. There is a fully equipped costume shop. It was reported that the budget for production has not had any substantial increases in quite some time, but because of growth of the program, the number of productions and students has significantly increased. There appears to be significant need for additional resources in this area.

There is one Office Associate II for the Department of Theatre and Dance. There is no music director, however there are live accompanists for ballet and modern. Both accompanists were accomplished and skilled.

The institution appears to meet the threshold standards in regard to faculty.

F. Facilities, Equipment, Health, and Safety

There are 3 studios (Clark Hall, 2 in Bryant), and a 623-seat proscenium theater in Morgan Hall that is used for classes and one classroom in Rowand Johnson that is used for dance history and anatomy courses. All studios have sprung floors and are well equipped with sound and technology. There is an electronic piano in only one studio. All the studios have access to bathrooms. There appears to be a need for shower facilities & shades in the men’s dressing room in the Clark studios. All faculty members are trained in CPR and there are first aide kits in all studios. There are emergency
procedures in place for weather and emergencies on campus. Faculty members reported a recent university project, in which all programs designed readiness plans for severe weather.

Space issues are a primary concern in regard to the size and scope of the program. More studios appear to be needed to limit class size and provide adequate studio spaces for student projects and rehearsals. The lack of multiple studios for this large student body affects their abilities to adequately level their classes. One studio is spaced in distant location requiring a 7-minute walk to and from the space. The onsite visitors discussed the plans for a new theater and studios with the Provost, Dean and Chair. The institution has hired an architectural firm, and all administrators voiced confidence that they have the funding for this project. The 2013-18 Five Year Plan advocates “…construction of an adequate performance and training facility for Theatre and Dance, including, but not limited to a 500+/- seat proscenium theatre, 250 seat flexible space theatre, “black box” experimental space, rehearsal rooms, 4 adequate sized dance studios, costume and scenery studios, and additional support spaces.” (Self-Study p. 34)

The facilities, equipment, and technology appear to be minimally adequate to support faculty needs, all curricular offerings, and all students enrolled. The program does not appear able to support further growth and maintain compliance with NASD standards.

The performance facilities are well equipped with new lighting system, LED lights, and a functional lighting board. The dressing rooms in the Morgan Theater appear to be less then adequate for the needs of performance. There are two narrow spiral staircases to the dressing rooms. Once up in the dressing rooms there are no communication devices if a student should be injured and can’t get down. When descending the staircase, the site visitors became stuck due to a door that was blocking the access to the stage. The visitors recommend the unit put in a communication system in the dressing rooms, and fix the access issues from the dressing room to the stage. Therefore, the institution does not appear to meet standards of safe and secure in reference to the dressing rooms the Morgan Theater. (NASD Handbook 2013-14, II.F.1.k.)

The only studio that has key card access is the Bryant Studios, which is a distant site. All other studios are within faculty observation. Custodial services appear to be sufficient. Funds are available from multiple sources for maintenance.

The space appears to be minimally adequate for the current program and does not allow for growth or increased opportunities to generate IUs.

The institution is encouraged to submit any additional information or updates regarding building plans with its Optional Response.

G. Library and Learning Resources

“The dance collection is part of the collections of the Amelia Gayle Gorgas Library which serves the social sciences, arts, and humanities. The Gorgas Library is centrally located on campus and is under the authority of the Dean of Libraries.” (Self-Study, p. 11)

The library faculty, online and print/media collections and the librarian serve the research needs of the dance faculty and students. The print and media collection are accessible to faculty and staff and there appear to be ample hours of operation. In addition, dance faculty staff and student have access to numerous online sources. The budget for the dance acquisition of print, media, and online subscription appears to be adequate.
The Librarian for Dance was informative about the needs of the school and she works closely with a tenure track dance faculty for allocation requests.

It appears that the dance unit has the library, learning, and information services necessary to fulfill its purposes and appropriate for the size and scope of its operations. The visiting evaluators found that the holdings, databases, media resources, inter-library loan program are available to the dance unit. It appears to be consistent with the size and scope of the dance unit’s curricular offerings.

The functional position of the dance collection within the total library structures are clearly identified, and the responsibilities and authority of the dance unit library subject specialist appear to be well defined.

The institution appears to meet the standards in regard to the library.

**H. Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record Keeping, and Advisement**

Reconciliation, Admission-Retention: There has been major growth at the university with increased overall student enrollment from 17,000 in 2005 to 35,000. There are multiple recruitment efforts from the university, college and department. Recruitment materials appear to be accurate. The dance unit considers the performances of ARDT and Dance Alabama as the primary recruiting tool for the dance program. Besides their regular performances “… faculty and students visit other college campuses and local high schools to choreograph, give master classes, lecture demonstrations, or to perform for recruitment purpose.” (Self-Study p. 13) The ABT Summer intensive is an important recruitment tool and has brought in a significant number of students with advanced training in ballet. Dance students also reported that they were recruited for other programs, found out there was a dance program, and ended up at UA with a double major in dance and another subject.

Retention policies and procedures are published, and in line with college and university policies. Performance opportunities, scholarships and financial aide are considered part of the retention program. **In the meeting with students, they reported that there is a significant drop in students from the first to second year.** During the student interview, students suggested that more attention needs to be paid to the audition process to accept students who will succeed in the program. Retention appears to be of some concern with an approximate 60% retention rate. The Heads Report shows the following statistics: FY 10 (140 majors, 20 graduates) FY 11 (146 majors, 21 graduates) FY 12 (159 majors, 31 graduates). (Self-Study pp. 51, 79, 108)

Communications with perspective students and parents/guardians appear to be accurate and presented with integrity. The dance unit is prominent in the undergraduate bulletin and other university publications.

**Record-Keeping:** Student official records are accessed online through the University Registrar system called Degree Works. Faculty and administration are readily able to input and/or retrieve important student information through password-protected access to the mainframe computer systems. In addition the office staff keeps hard copy records of grades and any grievances are kept for 5 years. This is available for faculty to view student records. (Self-Study p. 15) Both students and faculty reported that each major is assigned a faculty advisor who tracks their progress and guides curricular decisions. The Dance faculty only advise on dance courses. There are university wide staff that advise the students on general studies. The examples of record keeping viewed by the visitors
were advisement notes, samples of alumni transcripts, grade reports, evaluation forms, and writing samples. In addition transcripts were reviewed in Degree Works.

Advisement: “A period of advising takes place about midway through each semester in order for the student to register for classes the following semester.” There are convocations, and career goal advising. Communication is distributed through emails, Facebook, and postings. (Self-Study p. 15) Students appeared to be satisfied with the advisement process. It appears that there is a high degree of informal, intuitive, interactivity of students and faculty in the advisement/assessment process.

The institution appears to meet NASD standards in regard to recruitment, admission, retention, advisement and record keeping.

I. Published Materials and Web Sites
A variety of print materials were reviewed on-site and these appear to represent the dance unit and programs accurately. The website is comprehensive and accurate. It includes program mission, faculty biographies, policies, communications, health information, facilities information, performances and engagement activities. The alumni page lacked biographies of dance alumni, which is a missed opportunity. The unit is in the process of developing a new website that will provide better graphics and more detailed information to the public. There is an excellent online ticket system that allows easy access to purchasing tickets to performances from which the unit is able to generate reports about audience attendees, payment choices, comp tickets, etc.

Basic institutional policies for defining credit hour were not published and readily available. In discussions with the Provost, Dean and Chair, this document has been recently rewritten and it will be posted soon. (NASD Handbook 2013-14, II.I.1.c) the site-visitors received the UA credit policy on 2-12-14. The institution is encouraged to submit this information with its Optional Response. Transfer credit policies are publically disclosed with established criteria. Program and degree titles are consistent with content. Mention of NASD accreditation is evident on website.

J. Branch Campuses, External Program, use of the Institution’s Name for Educational Activities Operated Apart from the Main Campus or the Primary Educational Program (Not Applicable)

K. Community Involvement; Articulation with Other Schools

The UA dance Program hosts an annual summer intensive of American Ballet Theater. They also have several partnerships with dance schools such as The Pulse and Broadway Dance Center, NYC.

L. Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community (Not applicable)

M. Standards for (1) Independent Post-secondary Dance Units Without Regional or Other Institutional Accreditation and /or (2) Proprietary Institutions (Not applicable)
N. Programs, Degrees, and Curricula

1. Credit Hours
   In the transcripts viewed by the on-site visitors all credit hours for the BA degree match the actual classroom hours for each course offered. The visiting team found the transcripts to be in order.

   a. Definitions and Procedures
      (1) Definition of Credit and Methods of Assigning Credit was not found in the Self Study as required in (NASD Handbook 2013-14, III.A.4.) The information regarding the value of a unit, and unit load for students and the transfer of credit policies appear to meet NASD standards.

      (2) Procedures Used to Make Credit Hour Assignments: At University of Alabama, the contact hour to credit hour ratio is 1:1.

      (3) Means Employed to Ensure Accurate and Reliable Application: Studio courses have an increased number of contact hours that dance faculty teaches. This information cannot be found in the self-study but is in practice to give the students more technique.

   b. Evaluation of Compliance
      The visitors consulted the Undergraduate Catalog and discussed issues regarding credit hours with the dance executive and the Dean of School of Dance. The visitors were told that a school wide policy, has been written to meet the Federal guidelines and it will be published by the university. The visitors were sent the UA Credit Hour Definition policy, which was not posted at the time of this writing. The institution is asked to submit this document with its Optional Response.

2. Specific Curricula

   There is one undergraduate degree, Bachelor of Arts in Dance, at the University of Alabama. The program appears to meet content and competency standards. Development of competencies are listed below. The time requirement for credit appears consistent with the published credit policies of the institution and in compliance with NASD standards. Curricular structures and requirements provide sufficient time on task to produce the competencies required and expected. No online or hybrid dance courses are being offered or considered in the near future.

   Bachelor of Arts – 4 years: Dance

   (1) Status: Submitted for renewal of Final Approval for Listing

   (2) Curriculum: Curricular structure, content, and time requirements enable students to develop a range of knowledge, skills and competencies expected of those holding a liberal arts degree in dance. This program is heavily weighted in technique - a majority of the requirements are in technique and there is an expectation by the faculty of excellence in technique and performance. Students reported that faculty encourages them to take additional classes in technique and they are able to take these classes as an audit. Although the students have a wide range of technical abilities it seems to meet the needs of this diverse student body. The curriculum allows for students to find individual paths based on their strengths. Although the emphasis is on performance no credit is given for performance activities. The combination of advice to take additional technique classes outside the credit range and no performance credit
creates a culture of achievement beyond the BA level. The visitors observed a consistent curriculum supporting a philosophy of technical and performance expertise.

(3) Title/Content Consistency: All titles appear to be consistent with the delivered content in the curriculum.

(4) Student Work: The students showed significant technical skills generally more advanced in ballet than jazz and modern. Students have substantial performance abilities and are able to perform a variety of styles including major ballets on pointe. Student work did not show a high degree of innovation. The movement was based on technical information from classwork, revealing a preference for athleticism, physicality and traditional values. The production values were high.

(5) Development of Competencies: The students are required to be proficient in one technical style (ballet, modern & jazz) to graduate (a minimum of 12 credit hours in (300/400 level) technique courses and competency in at least one other dance style. (Self-Study p. 17) Students and faculty report that the system for advancing students to the next level is through grading - students must receive a C+ to advance to the next level. The visitors observed a wide range of levels in all technique classes. The 200 level had a wide variety of beginning to advanced dancers, while the 400 level includes many students that are not as advanced as students in the 200 level. Because of the lack of multiple studios, leveling is more a matter of scheduling and year of the student, and not due to observable physical skills. However, in general work at the introductory level is followed by increasingly advance work. The levels specified appear to be consistent with expectations for undergraduate liberal arts major in dance. Many students observed appeared to have achieved BFA level work in the area of technique.

(6) Overall Effectiveness: The University of Alabama appears to meet the specific competency expectations for a liberal arts degree in the areas of general education, dance studies, and performance and dance electives. It appears that all faculty are teaching appropriate and tested techniques and methods for a BA degree. The institution appears to meet the standards for the Bachelor of Arts in Dance.

Study of the Transcripts of Recent Graduates and Comparison with Catalog Statements
Transcripts for the BA program were reviewed on-site and were found to be consistent with the Undergraduate Catalog Statements

Total Performance of Program
The University of Alabama appears to be in compliance with the NASD standards. The history of the program is rooted in a strong tradition of conservatory approach that values technical expertise and versatility of the performer. This remains to be core to the mission and current practice of the program. As the program gains new faculty and space, they will need to carefully consider their history as well as new possibilities for their future.

Annually there are two main stage concert of ARDT and two to three concerts of Alabama Dance and opportunities to perform off-campus in local and regional festivals and events. The visitors reviewed dvds and programs of both student and faculty concerts. Attendance records reveal that concerts are fully produced with costumes and lighting. The dances were performed with technical expertise.
O. Dance Unit Evaluation, Planning, and Projections

Evaluation, Planning Projections and Development: The dance unit is about to enter a major transitional moment. With the addition of new faculty and a new building there is an opportunity to create a strategic plan that clearly moves this program into the future. Because of the small size, new faculty and the possibilities of many new directions, it is strongly recommended by the on-site visitors that the dance unit undergo a comprehensive strategic planning with an outside consultant.

The dance unit demonstrates that the educational and artistic development of students is first among all evaluative considerations. Students appear to have regular opportunities to evaluate the curricular experiences in which they participate. Critiques, course-specific examinations, informal faculty/student advisement and discussions, peer reviews, and performance assessments are evident.

Completeness and Effectiveness of Self-Study: The Self-Study provided the readers a general overview of the dance unit. The visiting team commends the unit for writing a clear and concise self-study. It was clear to the site visitors that some faculty members were strongly involved in the process and one faculty member was the lead writer. The document appears to be accurate based upon observations and conversations between the evaluation team and the various constituencies on site.

P. Standards Summary

1. Regarding the dressing rooms in Morgan Theatre as noted in Section F. above, it is not clear how the institution meets standards in regard to facilities, equipment and safety as described in the NASD Handbook 2013-14, II.F.1.k.

2. Regarding the publication of how credit hours are determined, the institution does not appear to meet standards in relation to published materials as described in the NASD Handbook 2013-14, II.I.1.c.

3. Definition of Credit and Methods of Assigning Credit was not found in the Self-Study as required in NASD Handbook 2013-14, III.A.4.

4. It appears that faculty cannot sustain current workloads without harm to wellbeing, research portfolios, service/shared governance and/or administrative responsibilities. (NASD Handbook 2013-14, II.E.2. and 4). The institution noted that it plans to hire two additional faculty and is requested to submit additional information in the regard with its Optional Response.

Q. Overview, Summary Assessment, and Recommendations for the Program

1. Strengths

The culture of the dance unit reflects nurture, trust and respect. It reflects values presented in all observable areas of the university structure. The mission of the dance unit is being realized and reveals the following strengths:

• A well-defined BA program based in technical excellence and versatility of the dancer.
• Excellence of technical training and performance within a BA.
• Students are engaged and well informed.
• The BA offers opportunities for double majors and individualized choices. This creates a vibrant community where students share diverse ideas and information.
• Excellent camaraderie between the dance and theater unit. This is a highly functioning unit that works together as a collaborative team.
• Excellent entrepreneurial spirit. They have developed excellent community and audience development programs that earn income for the program.
• The institution is responding to the market, offering students programs that are appealing.
• The Dean, Provost and President are aware and supportive of the dance unit.
• The institution offers exceptional opportunities to perform and connect with the professional community.

2. Recommendations for short-term improvements

• Until the unit stabilizes with new faculty and spaces, it is critical that the unit resists upper administration goals to increase enrollment. The dance unit should focus on maintaining or decreasing enrollment until the proper resources are put in place.
• The institution is encouraged to consider additional full-time staff or faculty member in the area of costume design and music director.
• The institution is encouraged to consider greater emphasis on current trends of the field in both dance training, theory and choreography would help expand students creativity and understanding of the field.
• As a small unit excellent informal communication systems have developed. However, a formal written procedures and processes (by-laws, budget reporting systems) seems lacking and may be crucial during a time of change and growth.
• The institution is encouraged to consider the development of a clear level placement system based on skills rather then grades to communicate clear expectations to students, and ensure technical development.
• The purpose of a BA program is the study of dance in a liberal arts framework. Granting no credit for performance and an encouragement of students to audit technique classes seems to create a culture in which students spend additional hours in dance outside of the credit requirements. Caution should be taken in the future to make sure students are not pushed beyond the purpose of a BA Degree.

3. Primary Futures Issues

The dance unit is in a major transitional moment. With the addition of new faculty and a new building there is an opportunity to create a strategic plan that clearly moves this program into the future. It is strongly recommended that the dance unit under-goes comprehensive strategic planning with an outside consultant.

4. Suggestions for Long Term Development

• The department is about to undergo a moment of transition – new spaces, faculty and a consistently growing enrollment. All of these dynamics have led to an uncertain climate. Strong leadership is needed to further the next direction for this historically important department.
• It is recommended that the dance unit plays a strong role in the development of the new facilities. At least one tenure track faculty in dance should sit on the committee for the development of the new facilities.
• The current dance faculty should be empowered to proactively discuss future directions for dance within the curriculum and workload issues.
• The unit has multiple possibilities for the future including expressed interests in growing the non-major program, and developing a BFA and/or an MFA. Careful attention should be put to possible future directions, that honors the strengths of their history and the resources necessary to fund these programs.