

April 5, 2010

David W. Pershing  
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs  
205 Park  
Campus

Dear Vice President Pershing,

Enclosed is the proposal for the Graduate Certificate Program in Screen Dance which was approved by the Graduate Council on March 29, 2010. Included in this packet are the proposal and signature page.

Please forward this proposal to the Academic Senate to be placed on the information calendar for the next meeting of the Senate.

Sincerely,

Charles A. Wight  
Dean, The Graduate School

## **Proposal for an Interdisciplinary Graduate Certificate Program in Screen Dance**

### **1. NEED**

The Department of Modern Dance and the Department of Film and Media Arts seek to create a new interdisciplinary graduate certificate program in the burgeoning area of Screen Dance (also referred to as Dance Film, Dance for the Camera, Cine Dance, and Video Dance). The Department of Modern Dance has been offering a class in the history, theory and practice of Screen Dance since 1998 and was the first dance department in the country to present an annual (and subsequently biannual) Dance for the Camera Festival and Workshop. These events draw artists, faculty members and students from around the country and Canada, and have been met with great enthusiasm, demonstrated by enrollments and attendance. On numerous occasions faculty members from the Department of Film and Media Arts contributed their expertise to these workshops. In recent years, as the genre of Screen Dance has blossomed world wide, there has been increasing inquiry and interest in the possibility of pursuing a course of study with a focus in this particular area of endeavor, both from students of film and dance. The proposed graduate certificate will be available to graduate students within the College of Fine Arts, as well as non-matriculated students who have completed their Bachelor's Degree.

With the collaboration between the Department of Modern Dance and the Department of Film and Media Arts, it will be possible to create this new curricular focus, with the addition of only one new course to existing departmental offerings. This is an exciting opportunity for the College of Fine Arts at the University of Utah to be the first in the country to offer such a specialization, with very little impact on existing programs. As no other certificate or degree program such as this exists in the country, it is anticipated that both departments will see increased course enrollments.

### **Background**

In 1998, now Associate Professor Ellen Bromberg joined the Department of Modern Dance to create dance media and technology courses within the department. The core class, called Choreography and Diverse Media (soon to be renamed Screen Dance), provides students with exposure to the history, theory and practice of Screen Dance. A frequent guest teacher, Professor Bromberg has been invited to teach workshops and courses in Screen Dance as well as curate festival screenings throughout the country and abroad, and in each of these circumstances, students inquire about the existence of a program with this area of specialization, as none exists in the U.S.

In the Department of Film and Media Arts, a significant number of faculty members have been involved in some aspect of dance and film over the years. Current Department Chair, Professor Kevin Hanson, has recently created a documentary on Children's Dance Theater. Assistant Professor Connie Wilkerson has taught video editing in two of the Modern Dance Department's Dance for the Camera Festivals and she has also served as Production Director of a two-camera dance film shoot in collaboration with Ellen Bromberg. Professor Brian Patrick has worked closely with faculty members in dance to

create a number of dance films, and Associate Professor Chris Lippard has researched issues of body representation having published on the experimental body and dance-based cinema of Derek Jarman. Additionally in the Department of Modern Dance, Assistant Professor Eric Handman conducts creative research in this genre and has had his films screened at a number of dance film festivals in the U.S.

In recent years there have been a number of graduate students in film who have expressed interest in collaborating with dance students to make dance films, but the mechanisms have not been in place to afford this opportunity.

### **Opportunity/Justification**

As stated, this is an important and timely move for the College of Fine Arts to be the first in the country to offer a certificate in the area of Screen Dance. Because of the previous activities of faculty in both Dance and Film, this is a natural evolution in the offerings of both departments, with very little organizational impact. Faculty members in both Modern Dance and Film and Media Arts have taught video production courses, however while Modern Dance has acquired some essential equipment over the years (cameras, tripods, dolly, microphones, etc.) it is not equipped to take students to a more in-depth and professional level of education in this area. Collaborating with the Department of Film and Media Arts would make this possible, as they offer comprehensive training in video and film production. Also of importance for dance students would be the exposure to traditional film theory. For film students, an opportunity to explore the relationship between the moving frame and the moving body, along with in-depth study in movement techniques and composition, would offer a unique addition to more traditional filmmaking approaches.

This certificate would be open to students in any of the six academic units within the College of Fine Arts, as this certificate would broaden their perspectives on the discourse and practice of a burgeoning hybrid form of social/cultural art production. It would also be open to returning professionals in both dance and film who have been working in the field or teaching at other institutions, and seek more specialization and certification in this area. Acceptance at all levels of entry will be contingent on portfolio review, interview and previous grade point average (3.0 or above).

### **2. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

A Certificate in Screen Dance provides the umbrella under which an interdisciplinary curriculum can be developed and formalized. While the material natures of film and dance differ profoundly, as time-based art forms they share many theoretical and compositional elements. They are both concerned with temporal and visual composition, the construction of narrative, representation and abstraction, etc. (Indeed the earliest history of film is tied to dance with the Lumière brothers' filming of dance icon Loie Fuller in France and Thomas Edison's filming of Annabelle the Dancer in the US.) Students will have access to thorough and in-depth training in all aspects of film production: camera, lighting, sound, digital editing, etc. They will also have access to courses, which address Film theory and Screen Dance history and theory as well as an experiential movement theory and composition course, which comprises the theoretical

core of creation within the dance genre. Movement classes cultivate a fully embodied experience of time, which is a core principle of the flow of ideas rendered through the editing process. It is expected that the cross fertilization between students of different disciplines will generate innovation, experimentation and creativity within the hybrid form of Screen Dance.

### **3. IMPACT ON EXISTING PROGRAMS**

The curriculum for the proposed Graduate Certificate in Screen Dance will be derived from existing courses already offered within the Department of Modern Dance and the Department of Film and Media Arts, with only one new class to be added. This course: Movement Theory & Composition for Filmmakers, will be taught biannually as a Dance Special Topics Graduate Course and will be absorbed into existing faculty's teaching schedule. It is anticipated that there will initially be a relatively small number of graduate students who pursue the certificate, but that it will grow over time. As such, the impact on existing classes will be minimal. Once we have publicized this new offering, we anticipate an eventual average number of 15 students in the program. Letters from chairs indicate their belief that current classes can support these extra students. An important impact anticipated on existing programs is the unique perspective brought to each class by the presence of students trained in different disciplines. Differing perspectives add depth and richness to discourse within each area of study. This diversity pushes the boundaries of pre-existing assumptions about possibilities within a genre and, as stated earlier, facilitates interdisciplinary thinking and innovation.

### **4. COURSES**

The courses that will comprise the Certificate in Screen Dance are:

Film Theory (Film 6350)	(4)
Graduate Filmmaking 1 (Film 6500)	(4)
Cinematography (Film 6520)	(5)
Screen Dance (Dance 6340)	(3)
Movement Theory & Composition for Filmmakers (Dance 6961)	(1)
Total Units	(17)

Due to the hands-on nature of this proposed certificate, distance education would not be feasible.

### **5. ASSESSMENT**

It is expected that the proposed course sequence associated with the certificate will meet the stated educational objectives by offering students exposure and experience in the theory and practice of film, dance, and screen dance. For students entering a dance department (open to both Modern and Ballet students), they will be able to continue dance studies, while complementing them with the appropriate courses in film to develop desired technical and theoretical competencies. And likewise, students entering the Department of Film and Media Arts will be able to continue film studies, while

complementing them with designated courses in dance through which technical and theoretical competencies will also be developed. Students from other areas of study within the College of Fine Arts, or those with existing degrees from outside the University of Utah, will have the opportunity to explore this art form in ways that overlap their current foci, creating interesting hybrids of discourse and practice. Assessment will be based on student performance in classes and the quality of the final creative projects created for the Cinematography course. Students will be required to receive no less than a “B” grade in each course to stay in the program.

In the early stages of this certificate program, all participating faculty will meet at the end of each semester to assess the performance of students and the efficacy of the courses which comprise the certificate. Ongoing discussion will be required as we monitor the entire program of study, and implement desired modifications.

## **6. FACULTY**

While students entering this program will most likely study with many faculty members in the Department of Film and Media Arts and the Department of Modern Dance, the primary faculty members associated with the certificate program are:

Associate Professor Ellen Bromberg, Modern Dance (Certificate Coordinator)  
Associate Professor Stephen Koester, Modern Dance (Graduate Advisor)  
Associate Professor Kevin Hanson, Film and Media Arts (Division Head)  
Assistant Professor Connie Wilkerson, Film and Media Arts (Graduate Advisor)  
Associate Professor Chris Lippard, Film and Media Arts

## **7. COORDINATOR**

Associate Professor Ellen Bromberg, Modern Dance (Certificate Coordinator)  
(See attached curriculum vita)

## **8. ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

N/A

## **9. BUDGET**

As stated above, all faculty, courses, and materials exist within each of the participating departments to support the creation of a Certificate Program in Dance Film. At this time no additional funding is necessary for its implementation.