

FORM C
COLLEGE SCHOLARS PROJECT APPROVAL

SANDY P. HILTON
Scholar

CASEY SAMS
Mentor

STUDENT Choreography Project
Project Title

COMMITTEE MEMBERS
(Minimum 3 Required)

Name

Signature

J. Casey Sams

J. Casey Sams

Peggy Burles

Peggy Burles

FRED A. PIERCE III

Fred A. Pierce III

THOMAS A. CERVONE

Thomas A. Cervone

Tracy Capeland Hatter
Tracy Capeland Hatter

Tracy Capeland Hatter

PLEASE ATTACH A COPY OF THE SENIOR PROJECT TO THIS SHEET AND
RETURN BOTH TO THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR. THIS PAGE SHOULD BE
DATED AND COMPLETED ON THE DATE THAT YOUR DEFENSE IS HELD.

DATE COMPLETED

5/5/09

College Scholars Senior Project Final Report

Student Choreography Project



Tuesday May 5th, 3:30 – 5:00pm
University Center Room 216

SPShelton87@gmail.com

(908) 902 – 3414

Owner: Sandy P. Shelton

Submitted to: Casey Sams, Tom Cervone, Tracy Halter, Fred Pierce, and Peggy Burks

Executive Summary

The purpose of this project was to create a fully staged dance showcase that was produced, designed, choreographed and performed by students. These student-choreographed pieces were to be the final product of a yearlong process focusing on critical feedback and creating high production quality. In the past I have participated in many shows of this type, but always as a performer or choreographer. When I began this project, I had a very good understanding of what needed to be done, however planning and execution are two very different things.

This Student Choreography Project was the product of careful planning, as evident by the more than 386 emails that were written dating as far back as March 7th, 2008. When one thinks about the countless phone calls, meetings, and rehearsals, the aggregate time that went into this project is staggering. This project truly was an incorporation of all that I have learned, yet managed to teach me more than I ever could have anticipated.

Although I have had my share of trials during this process, I cannot begin to describe the sensation I felt as I watched the lights fade up on the first piece opening night. There I was, sitting in the back of the auditorium with 98 people in front of me all intently watching MY Senior Project. I wasn't running around back stage making sure everyone was ready. I wasn't calling cues from the wings, running the CD player or pressing the "Go" button on the light board. I was sitting down, enjoying MY Senior Project, and I am grateful for all the opportunities I have had and for all of those who helped me get to this point.

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The Organizational Plan

Project Overview

The Student Choreography Project was organized to create a yearlong creative process where students would have the opportunity to choreograph their own works. My goals for this project were:

- To create an opportunity for my peers to choreograph dance, and to give students in the community another chance to perform in, and observe, a dance performance.
- To create an opportunity for students in Lighting Design, Stage Management, and Graphic Design to practice their craft outside of the classroom, contributing to a finished product.
- To establish a process of critical feedback, from both peers and professional artists, that will stimulate new ideas and encourage artistic growth.
- To provide my peers with an opportunity to see their creation on stage.
- To market each show in a manner appropriate for the scale of the production while focusing on my target audience, students.
- To gain real experience in the process of producing a dance showcase.

I wanted to utilize each area of my College Scholars Program and to pass on what I have learned in this process to benefit the dance community at UT.

The Fall Semester started off very well. During the first week of classes in Fall 2008, I went to each of the Dance Technique courses to talk with the students and build interest in my project.

Anyone who was interested could take a “Choreographer Information Packet¹,” which clearly outlined what would be required. At the end of these presentations 27 students completed the sign-up sheet stating that they were interested in choreographing a piece; of that 27, only 13 students submitted the required written proposal. Two of those 13 decided that they would not be able to continue with the project prior to the Dancer Audition on September 7th. Another two dropped out before the 2nd showing on October 17th and one last choreographer pulled her piece the week of the Fall Formal Showing because she did not think it was polished enough to be performed. These last three students to withdraw from the project did so because of the amount of stress it had put on their academic lives. They were having trouble scheduling rehearsals with the dancers they had chosen, and ultimately did not want to create a piece that was not up to par with their abilities. I did my best to help each of these

¹ See Section A, part I

choreographers come up with a resolution that would allow them to continue participating in my project. However, in the end, their withdrawal was the best solution.

At the Formal Showing, the eight pieces that performed received praise from the student and faculty audience members. Approximately 100 students and 30 members of the general public were in attendance. During the feedback session following the performance, the comments were well articulated and the three adjudicators were in agreement about their comments for each piece. Over the next several weeks I met with each choreographer to discuss the adjudicators' comments and how, if at all, the choreographers planned to incorporate them during the spring. From these meetings, it became apparent that two of the eight pieces would not continue through the spring; one because the choreographer was transferring schools, and the other because the choreographer did not think she could manage to make all the changes that both the adjudicators and I had suggested. (Ultimately the lyrics in music she had picked and the movement she choreographed did not match up with her concept of the piece. All three components seemed independent and she could not think of way to unify them for the Spring Showcase.)

The Spring Semester began with a general information meeting at a local restaurant on January 6th, 2009. At this meeting I went over the timeline for the semester, the \$50 costume reimbursement, as well as some key changes I was going to make. The early part of this semester went very well. I found a Stage Manager, thanks to a suggestion from Casey Sams, as well as a Sound Board Operator, and met with the Graphic Designer about the promotional materials. I was able to find each choreographer rehearsal space in the UT Dance Studio, which ultimately required the UTPD unlocking the studio on Saturday mornings.

On January 29th one of my original two Lighting Designers had to drop out of my project. I was confident with the skills of the remaining designer and continued working on the performances. I was able to schedule the final defense and finalize the time slots for tech rehearsals in the auditorium. By mid February I started to visit each choreographer's rehearsal in lieu of the traditional 1st showing.

During one of the last rehearsals of this process, I realized that the majority of my choreographers and dancers would be attending the annual conference for the American Collegiate Dance Festival Association (ACDFA). Normally I would be glad to see attending such an event, however it directly conflicted with the 2nd Spring Showing. It was February 21st and the showing was March 8th, two weeks away. I will expand more on how I mediated this problem, but it was the first of several unanticipated issues that had to be resolved.

On March 10th I became aware of the second of these problems, a conflict involving Carnicus. I found the following on a UT website, “Carnicus is competition in which student organizations present a variety of skits of their own design and creation about campus life and pop culture.” Almost every Sorority on campus participates in this event, and on March 10th I found out that a choreographer and two dancers were involved. They were not aware that Carnicus directly conflicted with opening night of my project, so I presented the three with an ultimatum. I gave them until the end of the week to choose between my project and Carnicus. All three choose my project. These series of events were the inspiration for the use of Facebook, which allowed me to ensure that everyone involved in my project was aware of the required dates. I implemented the use of Facebook as a communication tool on March 19th.

On March 23rd, the second of my two original lighting designers had to drop out of my project. After several discussions, she recommended Angelyn Webb, a UT undergraduate majoring in Technical Theatre, who, with support from her classmate Phyllis Belanger, was able to put together an amazing lighting design. The only remaining hurdle involved the taping of the performance. I had originally arranged for both of my performances to be taped, but due to a conflict I noticed with another dance company, that could not occur. However, my Videographer, Jeff Delaney, and I were able to compromise with a taping of Sunday’s matinee.

The Final Spring Showing on April 5th was completed without any major problems. Each piece was performed twice with a minute in between each run for the choreographer to talk to their cast. I

recorded the showing on Angelyn's video camera so that she had footage to refer to when preparing her design. Just over a week later, I held a fully costumed run through in the dance studio. At this rehearsal we ran through the entire show twice, averaging approximately 38 minutes from start to end. I had set up the dance studio in the dimensions of the auditorium so both the choreographers and dancers would have an idea of how the stage was arranged.

On Friday April 17th, the production crew and I began the load-in for the show. I had reserved a five-hour window from 6pm to 11pm and we used every minute of it. The jobs completed that night included:

- Loading in and setting up borrowed lighting equipment
- Focusing and gelling the lights
- Straightening the concert 'sound shells' and arranging them to create a background and wing space

These tasks were completed in preparation for the tech rehearsals that began the next morning at 9am. The 'Weekend Performance Schedule'² was followed rather closely, with any deviation decided on well in advance. Those deviations included holding the 4pm Dress Rehearsal until 4:20pm, as well as delaying the start of each performance until 7:40pm and 1:40pm respectively.

In total, the Spring Showcase saw more attendees than the Fall Showing. However, with an approximated total of 98 attendees on April 18th and 65 on the 19th, the November 15th Formal Showing had a larger per show audience.

Project Structure

The focus of the Fall Semester was to facilitate opportunities for the student choreographers to receive critical feedback. However, I did not want this to be limited to just the observations of their peers, or even current faculty members. Given that, I required the choreographers to attend four separate showings, the last of which was the Formal Showing, open to the public. As outlined in the "Choreographer Information Packet," the four showings were clearly scheduled:

² See Section A, part II

- 1st Fall Showing: September 26th
 - Feedback from Sandy Shelton
- 2nd Fall Showing: October 17th
 - Feedback from Deborah Whelan, the Dance Program Director and Artistic Director for Beaumont Dance Works
- Final Fall Showing: November 2nd – No feedback
 - This was to ensure that the pieces were ready for the Formal Showing
- Formal Showing: November 15th
 - Feedback from the Adjudicators:
 - Leah Pinder – Found member of Momentum Dance Lab
 - Heidi Lambert – VP of the TN Association of Dance
 - Q – Alum of the Alvin Ailey School of Dance

Additional production dates of tasks I completed in preparation for the Formal Showing include:

- March 7th, 2008: Began emailing with AMB regarding Auditorium availability
- May 21st, 2008: Met with Casey about project timeline
- Sept. 26th, 2008: 1st email to Adjudicators
- October 16th, 2008: VIP Invitations went out
- October 27th, 2008: ¼ page flyers to printer
- Nov. 11th, 2008: Show Programs to printer

The Spring Semester was focused on producing a fully staged theatrical showcase of student choreography. This was achieved by having the performance in a traditional performance venue, a collaborative lighting design, and high quality promotional materials. My main criterion for the venue was that there was a separation between the performers and the audience. I wanted to ensure the creation of an environment on the stage, which in my mind adds to the overall production quality.

The structure of the Spring Semester was laid out in detail and distributed to the choreographers in the “Choreographer Information Packet.” However, given that this file was created on August 13th, 2008, some key changes were made:

- 1st meeting was on January 6th
- 1st Spring Showing was changed to a less formal format
- 2nd Spring Showing compromise³
- Run through (4/13) was canceled to ensure attendance for Dress Rehearsal (4/14)

The most notable of these changes involved the format change for the 1st Spring Showing. Instead of having the traditional showings, where all the dancers and choreographers would come together to

³ Explanation in “Weaknesses” Section of S.W.O.T. Analysis

show me their pieces, I decided it would be easier for me to come to the choreographers' individual rehearsals. This approach was much more effective and I was able to give more meaningful feedback to each choreographer.

Additional production dates of tasks I completed in preparation for the Spring Showcase include:

- January 14th, 2009: 1st Meeting with Graphic Designer
- March 1st, 2009: Began discussions with Videographer
- March 23rd, 2009: Began draft of Show Program
- March 26th, 2009: 1st proof of poster design
- March 30th, 2009: Final design proof
- April 1st, 2009: Spring Posters to printer
- April 2nd, 2009: VIP invitations
- April 3rd, 2009: Sent performance information to newspapers
- April 5th, 2009: Emailed choreographers my observations from Final Showing
Emailed everyone the schedule for the performance weekend
- April 6th, 2009: Submitted costume reimbursement receipts
Venue walkthrough with Lighting Designers
Contacted students about ushering for performances
- April 13th, 2009: Show program to printer

S.W.O.T. Analysis

Strengths

I believe that the biggest strength of this project was the amount of pre-planning that I put in early on. As you have seen in this report, decisions and timeframes that were set as early as May of 2008 have held true. That gave me the ability to deal with unforeseen hurdles as they arose because the other aspects of the project were self-perpetuating. Another strength was the amount of support this project received from the UT Dance Faculty. It was a common practice for students to be 'locked in' the dance studio following the last technique class of the day. This was done to allow the choreographers adequate rehearsal time and would not have been possible without Faculty support. Additionally, many of the faculty members took promotional flyers to their other studios, or put them up in the Downtown area.

Lastly, I believe that the commitment and skill level shown by many of the choreographers and dancers was a driving factor for the success of this project. The choreographers and dancers were:

Choreographers

Zoë Bennett – C
Caitlin Burke (Freshman) – C
Anna Campbell
Lauren List (Freshman) – C
Olivia Riggins – C
Andrea Wilson – C

Dancers

Zoë Bennett – C	Lauren List – C
Allison Brown – C	Ashley Martin – C
Maria Bertuso – C	Chelsea Newbolds – C
Tiffany Bridges – C	Kelsey Pound – C
Caitlin Burke – C	Taylor Powell – C
Ian Burke	Olivia Riggins – C
Sash Clark – C	Brittany Rinehart – C
Brittney Creagan – C	McKenzie Sadler – C
Stephanie Grullon – C	Jenny Salata
Lauren Henderson – C	Faith Sanford
Joe Hudson – C	Elayna Schranz – C
Christine Johnson – C	Andrea Wilson – C

‘C’ Denotes members of the 2008/2009 UT Dance Company

Weaknesses

The biggest weakness in this project was the communication breakdown, specifically looking at the ‘2nd Showing Compromise,’ mentioned earlier. During the 1st Spring Showing visits to each rehearsal, I was at a series of three in a row on February 21st. At the end of the last rehearsal, the choreographer was going over when her cast would meet next, noting that there would not be a rehearsal the following week because of the UTDC Show. She continued to say that she would be attending ACDFA the following week, so they would have two weeks without rehearsing. This last part caught my attention because, although I was not attending ACDFA myself, I knew the rough time frame of the conference. I soon realized that the majority of the choreographers and cast were not going to be able to attend the 2nd Spring Showing on March 8th and quickly sent an email about possible solutions. In this email, that was sent on the 21st, I began by mentioning that, “11 Days ago, I sent you all an email about the 2nd Showing. I have just realized that ACDFA, which many of you and your dancers are attending, conflicts with that.” I concluded by asking each choreographer to choose one of the following solutions:

- 1) Going to show your piece on March 8th at 4PM -or-
- 2) Going to show your piece on March 1st at 6PM -or-
- 3) Going to show your piece on March 13th at 3:30PM

Only one of the six choreographers responded to this email, which had the subject line “URGENT: 2nd Showing,” and that was four days later. This was by far the most irritating of the hurdles I had to face, but certainly not the last. Ultimately, I compromised and terminated the 2nd Spring Showing requirement, due largely in part to the next weakness.

It became apparent very early on that I lacked any sort of leverage that traditionally exists between a manager and their ‘employees.’ I felt an obligation to adhere to guidelines I had established at the beginning of the process, and not allow the choreographers to take advantage of me, but at the same time I need them to participate in my project. Had this project truly consisted of 27 choreographers, removing one from the process would have been a reasonable solution. However, given that I began the Spring Semester with only six pieces, I was worried that if any of them dropped, or were removed, the Spring Showcase would be embarrassingly short. This last fear was fueled by the growing phase out of the Dance Program, as I continued to imagine hearing, “Well of course the program is being terminated – they only have 5 students who are interested in choreographing,” in the back of my mind.

In the end, my worries were mediated by my decision to use Facebook as a tool for ensuring that both choreographers and dancers were aware of all of the deadlines. Prior to using Facebook as a communication tool, I had only been sending emails directly to the choreographers, expecting them to pass important details onto their dancers. I had made this decision for two reasons; I thought it would help establish the choreographer’s leadership role, especially with the more senior dancers, and I presumed that the choreographer’s would filter out details that were not relevant to the dancers. However, by using Facebook, I was able to take the middleman out of the communication process, while keeping the choreographers in the loop. In hindsight I would have used the Fall Semester, as communication was not as vital to the project’s success, to establish a communication system that was

effective for this group. I believe that would have helped me to avoid many of the hurdles previously mentioned. (Although since every choreographer was given dates in August that did not change, I believe these scheduling conflicts should have been discussed much earlier than they were.)

Lastly, while I believe the term ‘weakness’ to be too strong of a word, the performances did experience a few missed lighting cues. Although these issues were fixed in between each run of the show, new ones, that had not been problems before, would arise. I believe these errors resulted from uncertainty about when certain cues needed to be called as both the Stage Manager and Lighting Designer were not as familiar with dance, but more specifically not as familiar as I was with the dances being performed, as would have been ideal.

Opportunities

In my mind there were two things that sets this production apart from other dance performances in the Knoxville area. The first was that the performances were held on campus, making it easier to have tech rehearsals and reach the largest target audience – students. Additionally the ability to have multiple performances is a new ‘feature,’ if you will, of a student choreography show. This mediates the potential threat of conflicting productions

Threats

The direct threats, in terms of attendance, were all other performances that occurred during this timeframe. Obviously, another dance performance, such as what was produced by Ballet Gloria, was in direct competition with my project. However, more theatrical productions such as “Tommy,” at the Clarence Brown Theatre, and afore mentioned Carnicus drew on a similar audience base of theatregoers. Additionally, I believe there to have been more indirect threats as well, such as projects that may have been assigned which would have taken president over attending this performance.

Services Provided

The main focus of this project was separated into two distinct tasks. For the Fall the goal was to facilitate a venue for the choreographers to receive critical feedback on their works. In the Spring, the focus was to provide the students participating in the project with an opportunity to present their work in a public forum, with the highest production value possible.

Critical Feedback

I have attached an “Example Feedback⁴,” section to this report, which shows all of the comments given to a specific choreographer. On page 1 you will find my note from the 1st Fall Showing. Remember that choreographers needed to only have 30 seconds of movement at this point in the process. In my comments, I noticed that the movement had some nice variation in the effort quality, but the relationship between the corps dancers and soloist was going to be a hurdle. Also the facial quality of the dancers was not uniform, so I noted that it would be important to make sure the choreographer stayed aware of that throughout the process. I liked how her piece opened with contrasting formations and balance in the space, but I was concerned about the “random guy,” that appeared and disappeared. Even back in September of 2008 I knew that the development of the male character would be very important to her piece, and it continued to be the primary focus of her feedback throughout the process. Lastly I suggested pulling the corps downstage during the opening, as they started the piece at a lower level, so that the duet did not overshadow them.

On page 2 you will find the feedback Deborah Whelan gave after the 2nd Fall Showing where choreographers needed to have a full minute of movement. Mrs. Whelan’s comments praised the relationship between the levels of the corps and duet at the opening of the piece, which I had suggested. She went on to offer ideas for clearing up the dynamic between the male character and female soloist, as well as between the soloist and the ensemble.

⁴ See Section A, part III

On page 3 you will find the concept synopsis written by the choreographer as part of the adjudication process. The night of Formal Showing, I took the three adjudicators to dinner before the performance. This was as much a ‘thank you,’ gesture as it was a convenient way for them to meet each other and to finalize the feedback process. I wanted to make sure that the student choreographers would be able to get feedback based on the adjudicators’ initial reactions to each piece, as well as how effectively they conveyed their concept. Based on those guidelines, we decided on the following process; the piece would be performed and each adjudicator would take notes based on their first reaction, I would then hand them a short synopsis prepared by the choreographer and the adjudicators would compare the choreographer’s intention to their own understanding of the piece. The unique result of this process was specific ideas for the choreographer that would aid in the successful delivery of their concept.

However, the feedback did not stop with the Formal Showing. During the middle of February I went to each choreographer’s rehearsals and commented on what I saw. Additionally, I emailed each choreographer individually to recount my observations from the Final Spring Showing on April 5th. The following is an abridged version of the email I sent the choreographer of the piece highlighted above.

Greetings,

Please keep in mind that these are merely suggestions based on my observations. I have less experience with your piece than you do, so I may have picked up something you haven't noticed. Also, do not feel obligated to implement my suggestions:

Joe's Bag - the LD thinks she might be able to get ahold of an Army/ROTC bag - but I would def. suggest asking your friends if they know anyone

Joe's Shorts - I will bring my Camo Pants to Peggy's tomorrow for him to try on

You need to drill all of the unison sections

Make sure the dancers are comfortable with their prep for big tricks - i.e switch leap

Go over when to smile and when not to

The following is what needs the most attention:

Clarity about where Joe is in the realm of the Dance ... Is he the same place Elayna is or is he a memory ... The rest of my comments are based on the assumption that Joe is shipped out at the beginning of the piece, is in her memory throughout the rest of the dance, and then comes home from his deployment. I would suggest having Joe spin on (as he does for one entrance) should be a characteristic of when he is a memory. [My Note: The lighting ultimately helped to show this transition]

DON'T feel pressured or think that you need to use ANY of this. I am simply giving you suggestions.

As you can see, the offering of critical evaluation was a vital part of this project from the beginning. Feedback was presented to each choreographer from four different professional artists as well as my own suggestions, which were fueled by an intimate knowledge of their concept and the ability of their dancers.

Production Quality

Just as critical evaluation was the backbone of the Fall, production quality was the driving force for the Spring. For me, the term ‘production quality’ is a reference to anything that is part of an audience member’s experience, once they enter the Theatre, which is meant to enhance the overall presentation. For my project they include:

- Performance Venue
- Production Staff
- Theatrical Lighting
- Costumes
- Show Programs

Performance Venue

The Production of the Formal Showing was centered on the adjudication. The Formal Showing was presented in the UT Dance Studio on the evening of November 15th. The audience members were seated in folding chairs on the same level as the performers, while the three adjudicators were on raised platform behind them. As there was not wing space available, dancers would be seen at all times. The only ‘off stage’ area available was the Studio Office, which was used as a dressing room during the performance.

In the Spring the performances took place in the Alumni Memorial Building’s Cox Auditorium, which has a seating capacity of 900 with an additional 14 handicap locations. The stage is approximately 60 feet wide, and 40 feet deep. The only downside for this space is that it is designed as a concert hall. This made it necessary for me to find creative solutions in order to convert the space for a dance concert. This was most notably achieved by straightening the auditorium’s sound shells,

which are usually tilted to direct the sound produced by an orchestra, and arrange them in a manner that created a defined background and wing space. However, in my mind, the most beneficial aspect of this space was the separation between the performers and audience. This separation ensured the creation of an environment on the stage, which greatly aided in the ‘story telling’ aspect of these pieces. All of these benefits were not free however; it cost a total of \$1,073.81 to use this space.

Production Staff

The members of the Production Staff were a very important part of my project. Each of them excels in their respective fields and brought their expertise to the production. Although it may have been possible for me to fulfill many of these positions on my own, it would have been extraordinarily difficult and had a negative impact on the overall quality of the production.

As noted in the Show Program, the Production Staff were as follows:

- Producing Director, Sandy P. Shelton
- Stage Manager, Derek Waffel
- Lighting Designer, Angelyn Webb
- Asst. Lighting Designer, Phyllis Belanger
- Sound Board Operator, Michael Schober
- Graphic Designer, Devon Goodspeed
- Photographer, Anthony Cheatham
- Videographer, Jeff Delaney

Theatrical Lighting

The use of theatrical lighting was a very important aspect of my project from the very beginning, as stated in my goals earlier in this report. Lighting, if done properly, adds a tremendous value to any production, especially with dance. For example, in “Faith,” the father character comes back on stage in the middle of the piece, the second of his three appearances. When he leaves for the first time the audience has the impression that he is being deployed overseas. Therefore, the third time he comes onstage should be his return home. Without a lighting change during that second entrance, signifying a memory the main character (his daughter) had, the storyline may not have been as clear.

For the Spring Showcase, the Lighting Designer used 50 of the house lights and borrowed 8 instruments from the Clarence Brown Theatre. She chose 7 different gel colors and recorded approximately 65 cues for the run of the performance.

Costumes

Costumes are yet another production aspect that has the ability to enhance an audience member's understanding of a specific piece. For example, in "Faith," the male character wears camouflage pants. These pants reinforce the idea that the character is a member of the military and when he leaves, it is likely that he is being deployed. Another example comes from the hip-hop piece "Versus." In this piece, it was abundantly obvious that two rival groups were competing for the attention of the male character. These groups were easily identifiable due to their matching outfits, although their movement and staging would have conveyed this on its own.

Show Programs

The last of the elements that added to the production quality of the Spring Showcase were the Show Programs⁵. The differences between the Fall and Spring Programs is quite noticeable. In the Fall, the audience was given a simple program that was double sided and folded in half. This program's main function was to inform the audience to the order of the performance. However, the program for the Spring Showcase was much more elaborate. It included a cover that ties into the promotional materials as well as a "Note from the Producer," which was intended to inform the audience to the process the choreographers had gone through and the reason for the project. Of course it included the order of the performance, as well as production credits.

In the end, a total of \$517.00 in production costs, not including the venue, as well as an additional \$90.45 for costumes, was spent to enhance the production quality of the Spring Showcase. This is contrasted by the \$38.21 spent on the Formal Showing.

⁵ See Section A, part IV

THE MARKETING PLAN

Marketing Goals & Strategies

The focus of the Fall Semester was on critical feedback. This in turn caused me to allocate much more resources towards facilitating that feedback, in lieu of traditional promotion techniques. As you have noticed, this frugality was also reflected in the production materials for the Fall Showing. Although I did strive to build interest and boost attendance, my tactics were mild at best.

In total, I spent \$2.62 in the promotion of this performance. That expense was incurred when I had the university's on campus printing department, UCopy, photocopy my ¼ page flyer⁶ 40 times. This generated 164 flyers that were handed out by the performers, choreographers, and other supporters within the dance community. However, that was not the extent of my promotional efforts. I also created an event on Facebook, through which I invited a few of my own friends to the performance. I asked the choreographers and performers to do the same. In total, 187 individuals were invited via Facebook. Of that, 44 said that they were attending, 53 said they might attend, 53 said they could not attend, and 37 did not reply.

However, those numbers should be taken with a grain of salt. An individual's RSVP to a particular Facebook Event is not always reflective of their actual intentions. Additionally, they may have had conflicting plans when they submitted their RSVP on Facebook, but come performance time those plans had change. I think it is important to mention that the vast majority of invitees through this portal are friends of students participating in my project, as opposed to family members or the general public. I believe Facebook is a very valuable tool for 'word of mouth' marketing, but the data generated regarding anticipated attendance should be ignored.

On the other hand, my Spring Marketing Plan was very different than the tactics used in the Fall. In line with my goal of creating a high level of production quality, this plan was comprised of:

- The creation of a recognizable logo for all promotional materials
- Designed and strategically distributed 8.5 x 11 posters

⁶ See Section A, part V

- VIP Invitations to faculty and administrators
- An appearance in the Metropulse's Events Calendar
- The requisite Facebook event

All of which were released at specific times to maximize attendance.

When creating the marketing plan for the Spring Showcase, I had two conflicting issues. I had to inform the public of the performance early enough so it could be planned around, while not implementing the plan too early as to not warrant an individual's attention, or have my promotional materials covered up when they became most relevant. Given that, the 'launch' date for the most public portion of marketing plan, the 'poster plaster' was set for April 1st, 2009.

The Spring Plan

The marketing plan for the Spring was much more detailed than that of the Fall. The first point to tackle was the design of a recognizable logo⁷. The logo, as it is now, was basically the product of a three-stage collaboration. During the Dress Rehearsal for the Fall Formal Showing on November 15th, Anthony Cheatham took many pictures of the dancers. Anthony does not have a lot of experience with photographing dance, so the vast majority of his pictures were close ups that showcased the emotional element of the dances rather than the movement. After returning from Winter Break, I met with Anthony to look at the pictures he had taken. I picked out a few of my favorites and realized that I had two pictures of dancers connected to the ground, two standing, and one leaping.

The next week I met with Devon Goodspeed, a UT student majoring in Graphic Design, and explained my idea for creating a logo that would be the centerpiece for all the promotional materials. I told him that I thought arranging the pictures in a circle and abstracting them in some way, which I left up to him, would be a good start. Devon's creation was exactly what I wanted. I believe the biggest hurdle for him in this endeavor was that he had to manufacture an arm on the middle-right image.

The creation of this logo was only one third of what Devon was tasked to do. He also had to come up with designs for an 8.5 x 11 poster⁸, as well as the Spring Program Cover mentioned earlier. Devon did an amazing job with the poster and between the first draft he sent me and the final, I only asked for two changes. The first change was to remove an image of the earth he placed in the center of the poster. We both agreed that it was not in line with any aspect of my show, and Devon confessed that he had added it because he did not like having the 'rays' radiate from nothing. At our first meeting I had mentioned that I wanted to include the names of the six choreographers, so in the end Devon placed their names in center of the poster. I compensated both Anthony and Devon's efforts with an honorarium totaling \$75.00. Additionally the cost of printing the 150 posters came to \$65.55.

⁷ As seen on the Cover Page

⁸ See Section A, part V

My remaining marketing endeavors were employed without any costs. The first was a submission I made via an online form on the Metropulse's website. I asked to have the Showcase printed in their Calendar of Events⁹ and they approved it on April 6th, 2009. Although, for some unknown reason, they only printed the Saturday evening performance, it is hard to complain about free publicity, especially when it appears both online and in print. The second free marketing tactic was the creation of the requisite Facebook Event. However, this time the creation and publication of the event coincided with other marketing tactics. The result of this timed approach to my marketing plan was that it reached a much larger audience. In total 768 individuals were invited via Facebook. Of that, 108 said that they were attending, 193 said they might attend, 331 said they could not attend, and 136 did not reply. However, the same problems are evident here as they were in the fall given the total attendance at the Spring Showcase of 163.

I had hoped that the attendance generated by this increased marketing would have been much more evident than it was. It is impossible to determine whether or not the overall increased attendance was the result of the marketing or the availability of additional performances.

⁹ See Section A, part V

Financial Report

Summary of Expenses

I began this project with two funding sources. A \$2,500.00 grant from the Chancellor's Honors Program (CHP) and \$1,500.00 that was allocated to the Dance Society (UPSF Fund) for a production of student choreography. The latter was applied for prior to April 2008, at which point the final form of my Senior Project was still being determined. As soon as it became obvious that my objectives mirrored that of the Dance Society, I presented my plan to the other 14 student leaders and they voted to support my project. Additionally, I spoke with Dr. Craig and Mr. Mark Alexander to ensure that it was acceptable for me to use both sources. Ultimately, I decided that the Dance Society's allocation was ideal for ensuring the use of the Cox Auditorium for the Spring Showcase, given its high costs.

The following is the budget I presented to the Chancellor's Honors Program to secure the \$2,500 grant.

Sandy P. Shelton Senior Project Grant Proposal Revised April 20, 2008				
Fixed Costs	Frequency	Cost		Totals
Mentor Honorarium	1	\$ 300.00		\$ 300.00
Fall Production				
Facility	2	-		-
Minimal Lighting	1	30.00		30.00
Invitations	20	3.00		60.00
Playbills	100	0.11		11.00
Fall Marketing Costs		Budgeted		
Posters		75.00		75.00
Print Ads		100.00		100.00
Fall Choreo. Budgets	# of Choreo.	Budgeted Per Person		
Music	15	5.00		75.00
Costumes	15	20.00		300.00
Fall Sub-Total W/O Honorarium				651.00
Spring Production	Frequency	Cost		Totals
Facility	2	-		-
Cleaning	1	100.00		100.00
Minimal Lighting	1	30.00		30.00
Invitations	20	3.00		60.00
Lighting	2	100.00		200.00
Light Operator per hr.	10	20.00		200.00
Sound System	2	100.00		200.00
Dressing Room	2	20.00		40.00
Playbills	300	0.17		51.00
Video Recording	1	100.00		100.00
Spring Marketing Costs		Budgeted		
Promo Pictures		\$ 50.00		50.00
Posters		75.00		75.00
Print Ads		100.00		100.00
Gala Invitations		25.00		25.00
Spring Choreo. Budgets	# of Choreo.	Budgeted Per Person		
Music	6	5.00		30.00
Costumes	6	45.00		270.00
Fall Sub-Total W/O Honorarium				\$ 1,531.00
Project TOTAL				\$ 2,482.00

The budgeted totals per section are as follows:

• Mentor Honorarium:	\$300.00
• Fall Production:	91.00
• Fall Marketing:	175.00
• Fall Choreographers:	375.00
• Spring Production:	\$981.00
• Spring Marketing:	250.00
• Spring Choreographers:	300.00

Additionally, from the Dance Society's allocation:

• Spring Venue	\$1,500.00
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The Asset Ledger¹⁰ shows the opening balance for the CHP Grant and the UPSF Fund, as well as the specific expenditures credited against those accounts. However, the Expense Ledger¹¹ goes into much more detail by showing the opening balance for each expense fund, which is reflective of the budget amounts listed above.

I would like to note that between the time I was approved for the CHP Grant and I began to execute my plan, one major change occurred. I decided to have the November 15th Formal Showing adjudicated. This, combined with my decision to keep production costs in the Fall down, allowed me the opportunity to reallocate the resources of the Fall Choreographers Budget. I used this resource to bring in Q, who was a valuable member of the adjudication team.

¹⁰ See Section B, page 1

¹¹ See Section B, page 2 – 3

Simulation Analysis

From the time Dr. Craig said that he would prefer I not charge admission for the performances of my Senior Project, I decided that I would simulate the ticket revenues in order to comment on the financial realities of this project. Before going ahead with this analysis, I think it is important to mention the high probability of lower attendance levels had there been an admission charge, especially among students.

Similarly to the reports referenced in the previous section, I have attached a Simulated Assets Ledger¹² as well as a Simulated Revenue Ledger¹³, which goes into detail as to how I arrived at those figures. As you can see from these reports, the simulated revenue was a total of \$1,371.00. If you ignore the CHP Grant and the UPSF Fund, this project would have a net loss of \$1,278.78.

It is quite obvious that a project that loses more than \$1,200.00 annually is not a sustainable endeavor. It is also quite clear what expenses could be trimmed right off the bat:

<u>Expense</u>	<u>Savings</u>
• Obviously the Mentor Stipend would not be accounted for	\$300.00
• Knoxville area artists to adjudicate the student choreographers	406.50
• Purchase a more conservative amount of show program approx.	<u>90.00</u>
• Total	\$796.50

Another option to help that this project into the black would be to peruse other revenue streams. One approach would be to obtain sponsorship from local business by selling ad space in the show programs.

Another effective way to mediate expenses is to rely more on volunteers. My project spent just under \$180.00 in honorariums for work done by peers. This was done in appreciation for their hard work, but ultimately the resulting production would have been the same without it. This combined with a more frugal use of the Cox Auditorium would make this a sustainable Project.

¹² See Section B, page 4

¹³ See Section B, page 5

Project Conclusion

Everything that I have written in the last 26 pages has been a report on how I executed my Senior Project. This information has been an objective look at how I organized my project, opportunities I created, and problems that were solved. I have explained the tactics used to generate attendance at the final performances and how resources were allocated to achieve the goals I had set. However, I have yet to discuss the last of my stated objectives, “To gain real experience in the process of producing a dance showcase.”

When contemplating this last objective, I started to think about what I would have done differently, given all that I have learned in this process. I began thinking about the missed lighting cues, and my first inclination for ‘next time’ followed the idiom, “If you want something done right, do it yourself.” That idea began to bother me more and more because it was a large departure from my personality. However, I soon realized that it was only partially correct. Looking back on my Senior Project and considering changes that I would make, I came up with, “If you want something done right, take the time to make sure it is done right.” I realized that I should have spent more time with the Production Staff to ensure that they had access to all the information they would need for the performance. Instead of assuming that the Stage Manager and Lighting Designer would be comfortable calling cues the way I did for the Dance Composition class’s performance last spring, I should have spent the time to determine what would work for them.

As this idea of, “... [Taking] the time to make sure it is done right,” became fully developed, I realized that other areas of my Senior Project would have benefited from this mentality. This idea could be applied to ensure that effective communication channels were established. It would simply have been a matter of approaching a dancer, or someone on the end of the ‘telephone line,’ and comparing their understanding of the message to what was intended. Additionally, there were times when I noticed that a few of the choreographers were not aware of certain staging ideas. Ideas that I

assumed were common knowledge such as creating a balance on stage and asking performers to ‘open out’ during the more expressive moments. These ideas could have been discussed very early on in the process in a variety of different forums.

When I began planning this project, I was under the impression that I already had all of the skills I would need to successfully achieve my goals. I accounted for every detail I could imagine: the venue, the time line, personnel, when to begin marketing, and so on. Yet, in the Executive Summary I wrote, “This project ... managed to teach me more than I ever could have anticipated.” I started this process ‘knowing’ it all, but ended it with lessons I would have never received in a lecture hall.