



# UMBC

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Department of **Dance**



**UMBC Department of Dance** offers challenging and innovative instruction in technique, performance, composition, history, dance/technology, and production. The program integrates the study of dance as a discipline within a liberal arts program.

Our program develops the “whole” dancer, integrating the physical with the intellectual, and the analytical with the expressive. Students train in a wide range of styles with core faculty and visiting artists, gaining new perspectives about the changing world of contemporary dance. Our goal is to produce unique dance artists who have something to “say” as dancers and choreographers. We challenge our students to perform to their fullest potential, to test their limits as choreographers, and to question and think critically about dance.

The department prepares future dancers, choreographers, educators and scholars, through a core curriculum that includes traditional and experimental techniques, creative exploration, historical and aesthetic context, technology, and production skills.

Our department is dedicated to providing opportunities for students at all levels of skill to study dance. Students entering the program with little or no dance training are required to complete preparatory courses in addition to major requirements. Students entering the program with a high level of dance training may be placed on the Accelerated Pathway to the B.A.

Students may also prepare for certification to teach dance through a dual program administered by the Department of Dance and the Department of Education.



***"Performing at UMBC dance is thrilling because the stage is filled with the energy from your peers."***

*Jahnaye Samuel, Dance Major*

*2018-2022*





## B.A in DANCE

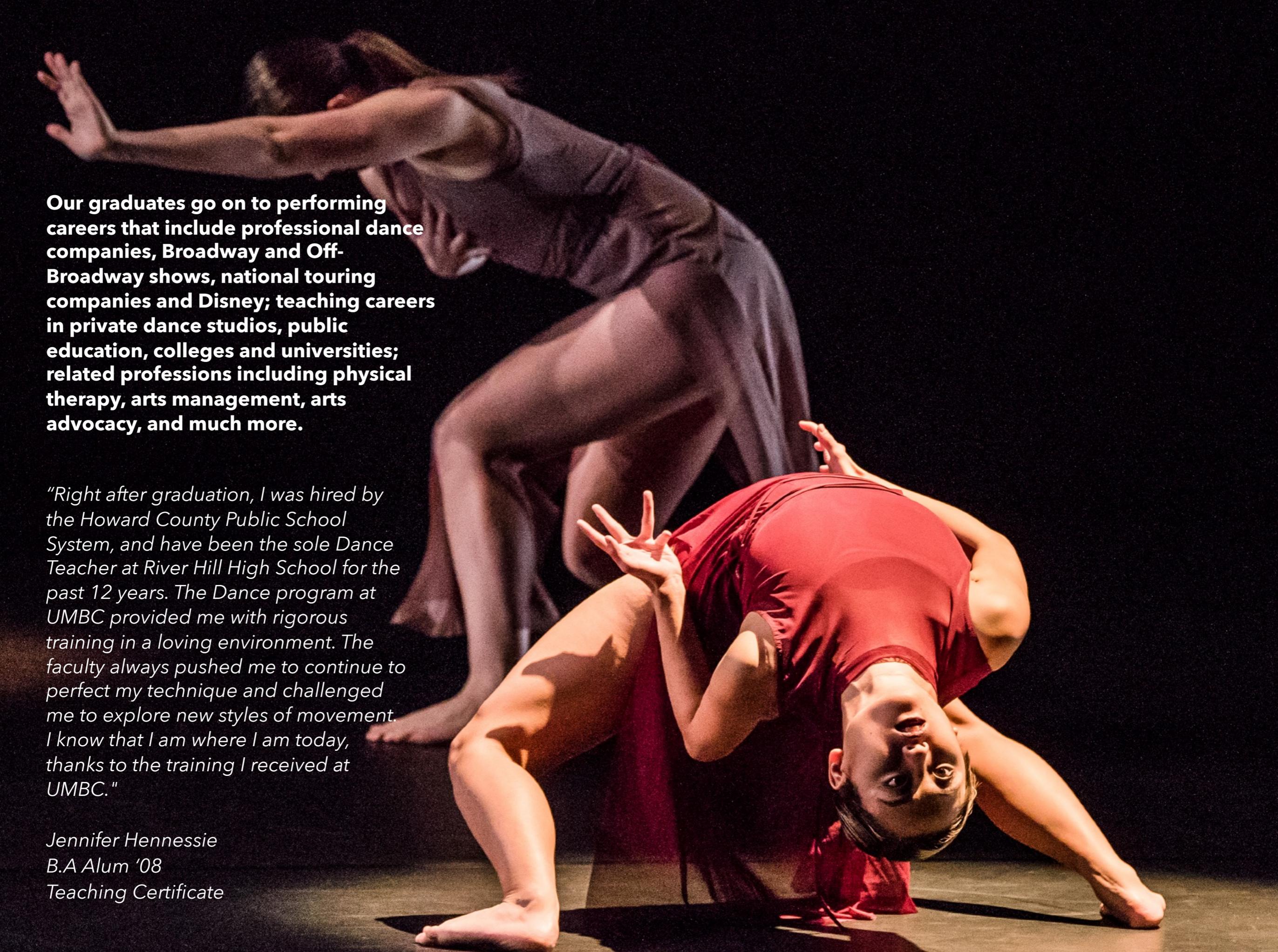
The B.A program prepares future dancers, choreographers, educators and scholars, through a core curriculum that includes traditional and experimental techniques, creative exploration, historical and aesthetic context, technology, and production skills. Students may pursue elective study in a number of disciplines and related subject matter.

The department offers a variety of approaches to performance and choreography and gives students opportunities to experience them through participation in choreography by faculty and visiting artists, and through independent study in choreography under a faculty mentor. There are opportunities to perform in every semester.

## Minor in DANCE

The Minor offers students the opportunity to study dance technique and to gain some breadth of knowledge about modern dance, ballet, the history of dance, and the process of creating and performing dance. The department holds auditions during the first weeks of each semester. All minors and non-majors enrolled in a technique class are invited to student concert auditions.

Go to [dance.umbc.edu](https://dance.umbc.edu) for more info



**Our graduates go on to performing careers that include professional dance companies, Broadway and Off-Broadway shows, national touring companies and Disney; teaching careers in private dance studios, public education, colleges and universities; related professions including physical therapy, arts management, arts advocacy, and much more.**

*"Right after graduation, I was hired by the Howard County Public School System, and have been the sole Dance Teacher at River Hill High School for the past 12 years. The Dance program at UMBC provided me with rigorous training in a loving environment. The faculty always pushed me to continue to perfect my technique and challenged me to explore new styles of movement. I know that I am where I am today, thanks to the training I received at UMBC."*

*Jennifer Hennesie  
B.A Alum '08  
Teaching Certificate*

**What dance technique courses are offered?** The department offers six levels of contemporary and four levels of ballet. In contemporary modern classes, students study a combination of traditional techniques such as Horton, Taylor, Graham or Limon, Umfundalai Contemporary African Dance technique, eclectic release-based techniques and the technique specialties of visiting and guest faculty.

**Is Jazz, Tap, Hip Hop, or Dance Team offered?** The department rotates special topics courses that include Intermediate/Advanced Jazz Workshop, Hip Hop Workshop, Tap Dance, African Dance, and other special courses such as Introduction to Indian Dance. Students who are accomplished at Hip Hop are encouraged to explore the UMBC Student Hip Hop crew, Major Definition. Students interested in Ballroom Dance should contact the Ballroom Dance Club, a student organization. The UMBC Dance Team is managed by the Athletic Program.



**How does the department determine my level of technique?** The first week of the semester serves as an “audition/placement” period. The instructor will assess whether students have registered for the appropriate class level. It is important to attend first class, and to make any necessary schedule changes during the first two weeks of the semester.

**Is there live accompaniment?** Most technique courses have live accompaniment. Accomplished pianists play for ballet classes. Percussionists or pianists play for contemporary classes.

**Can I major in two departments?** Absolutely. Many dance majors are double majors. Many dance majors have minors.



**Who gets to perform?** Students have many opportunities to perform at UMBC. At the beginning of each semester the department holds auditions for several concerts. Each semester there is a Senior Concert featuring work by senior dance majors enrolled in the Senior Projects course, a First Works Concert featuring student choreography, and an end-of-semester Dance Showcase featuring student, faculty and guest artist choreography.

**Who gets to choreograph?** Dance majors or minors take DANC 335 Independent Projects in Choreography and present their work on the First Works Concert. Students interested in gaining more experience in choreography may register for advanced Independent Study, and submit their work for the Showcase concerts. All dance majors must complete a Senior Projects piece in order to graduate.

**Can I study abroad?** UMBC has a robust Study Abroad program. Visit UMBC's [Study Abroad website](#) for information about applying to study abroad. Dance students work with a dance advisor to select a course of study while abroad. Our Department offers a three-week study abroad program to Denmark every other January during UMBC's Winter Session.

**What are the facilities like?** The Department has three large dance studios, one small studio, and dressing facilities. Performances are held in the Proscenium Theatre and the Dance Cube, a smaller performance venue with audience seating.

**The Linehan Artist Scholars Program** is for talented students who are serious about pursuing their art in a university setting. The program is a four-year scholarship and mentorship program for students who enter UMBC as freshmen with a major in the arts. Rigorous academics and challenging coursework prepare artists for success in multiple fields. [Read more here.](#)

*"Prior to my acceptance into UMBC's dance program, I had gotten the chance to take classes on the campus before and fell in love with not only the faculty and facilities but also the appreciation that the university has for all art forms. Each student is given full artistic liberty as well as support from peers and mentors along their journey at UMBC. No one student is favored over the rest and nobody's art is ever overlooked/undermined. I feel that this shows the true respect that the department has for all of its students and was excited to become a part of a community of dancers that cares so much about one another."*

*Deven Fuller, Dance Major  
2019-2023*





# Application Process

Please visit the [office of undergraduate admissions](#) for information on applying to UMBC. All applicants to the Dance program must first be accepted to the University. Interested students are encouraged to [schedule a tour](#) of the Performing Arts and Humanities Building.

To become a dance major at UMBC, entering students should declare their intention to major in Dance and attend an audition. Students accepted into the program must pass a “gateway” course (Intermediate Contemporary Dance Technique II) with a B or better.

## Audition

The audition is for scholarships and class placement levels. To become a dance major at UMBC, entering students declare their intention to major in Dance and must pass a “gateway” course (Intermediate Modern Dance Technique II) with a B or better. Students with extensive backgrounds in dance frequently complete this course during their first year at UMBC. Students who do not have a strong background in dance must complete preparatory courses as prerequisites to the “gateway” course.

Due to COVID-19, Class Placement and Scholarship Auditions for incoming Freshmen and Transfer Dance Majors planning to enter UMBC in Fall 2021 will be by recorded video audition on [getacceptd.com](https://getacceptd.com)

Go to [dance.umbc.edu/auditions](https://dance.umbc.edu/auditions) for more information

# Faculty & Instructors

**Carol Hess**, Chair

**Shaness Kemp**, Faculty

**Ann Sofie Clemmensen**, Faculty

**Brandon Russel**, Artist-in-Resident

**Doug Hamby**, Emeritus Faculty

**Sandy Lacy**, Instructor

**Jill Vasbinder**, Instructor

**Alison Crosby**, Instructor

**Constance Dinapoli**, Instructor

**Frankie Graham**, Instructor

**Monica Dale**, Instructor

**Brian Jones**, Technical Director



Visit Us

[dance.umbc.edu](https://dance.umbc.edu)



*"The thing that drew me most to the dance program at UMBC is how there is a very strong technique program, but there is also an emphasis of dancing beyond technique with artistry and developing your own voice as an artist. It is always very exciting that I am constantly expanding my movement vocabulary in all styles whether it be in modern, contemporary, ballet, improvisation, Umfundalai, and more. What has surprised me the most about UMBC's dance department is the wide range of experience levels among students that this program encompasses while still ensuring that each student is constantly working beyond their comfort zone to better themselves as a dancer and as an artist."*

*Katelyn O'Conner, Dance Major  
2020-2024*



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