

2025-2026

WKU Dance

CREATING | THINKING | ARTISTS



The WKU Dance Program brings another fantastic academic year to a close. Our dedicated group of students and faculty have enjoyed a range of vibrant and engaging learning and performance-based opportunities throughout the fall and spring semesters. Included within this newsletter are highlights from our various dance technique and theory courses, faculty and student research and creative activity, and faculty and student-choreographed productions. Our faculty is proud of each one of our dance majors and minors along with our BFA Performing Arts: Musical Theatre degree students. Their commitment to artistic and scholarly excellence remains strong. As we say goodbye to our graduating seniors, we are reminded of a quote by American ballet dancer, Wendy Whelan:

“The moment is everything. Don’t think about tomorrow; don’t think about yesterday: think about exactly what you’re doing right now and live it and dance it and breath it and be it.”

We are thankful to be apart of the journey of these talented individuals and wish them well as they dance on!

Professor Amanda Clark



Inquiries about the WKU Dance Program may be directed to Amanda Clark at amanda.clark@wku.edu.
Western Kentucky University is an accredited institutional member of the [National Association of Schools of Dance](#).



Innovative and Experiential Learning



Faculty consistently seek opportunities to provide students within unique learning and engagement. Associate Professor Meghan McKinley brought guest lecturers to her DANC 360: Dance In Culture colonnade course to enhance student understanding of and experience In various global dance forms. Meghan also took her DANC 310: Choreography I students to alternate locations on campus to experience site-specific improvisation and inspiration for course projects. Professor Amanda Clark challenged the creativity of her DANC 415: Tap Dance IV course through improvisation in various locations on top of the hill. Amanda took her DANC 300: Dance Pedagogy to observe classes at Jeramy Black's TaeKwonDo Academy through the pedagogical lens.



Student Research



NDEO Conference

Senior dance major and arts administration minor Marissa Burch attended the 2025 National Dance Education Organization Annual Conference In Detroit where she met up with dance alumna and NDEO presenter Charlotte Bariteau.

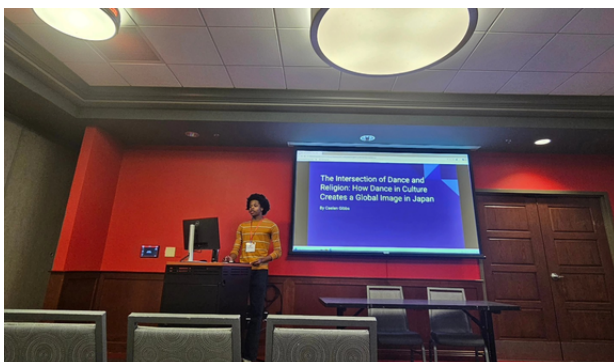
Shelby Cooley

Shelby Cooley presented their WKU Faculty Undergraduate Student Engagement Research (FUSE) project entitled “Gender Identity In Dance” at the WKU Student Scholar Showcase. Cooley’s original choreography, *Identity*, was performed In the fall Last Chance to Dance and spring *The Dance Project* concerts produced by the Dance Program. Their work was also Invited to perform in Diddle Arena at the WKU Dance Team Nationals Send-Off event!



Caelen Gibbs

Caelen Gibbs, senior double major in Dance and Asian Studies, presented his FUSE project, entitled “the Intersection of Dance and Religion: How Dance In Culture Creates a Global Image In Japan.” His research carried him across the globe where he was immersed In the culture and dance of Japan.



Faculty Research and Creative Activity

Amanda Clark

Professor Amanda Clark has continued her scholarly research in two distinct ways. The second edition of *Dance Appreciation* was published by Routledge in April 2026. She also worked with colleagues from across the country in the creation of a new manuscript under contract with Routledge. This book, *Dancing with Cancer*, will be released in 2027.

In addition to publications, Amanda consistently choreographs for *WinterDance* and *Evening of Dance* as well as the WKU Summer Dance Intensive.



Meghen McKinley

Professor Meghen McKinley remained active in her pedagogical research and community engagement efforts. She taught modern and jazz dance workshops at private dance studios from BG to Owensboro, engaging the next generation of collegiate dancers. Meghen consistently creates innovative and challenging work for the annual departmental productions, *WinterDance* and *Evening of Dance*, and directs the annual WKU Summer Dance Intensive.

Adjunct Dance Faculty

WKU Dance Adjuncts contribute greatly to the creative and community outreach endeavors of the Dance Program. **Amanda Poitras** and **Roberto Sifontes** engage young dance students within their classes at local dance studios. Both faculty members regularly contribute thoughtful and entertaining choreography for *WinterDance* and *Evening of Dance*. Additionally, Amanda directed the student concert *The Dance Project* this spring!

Visiting Adjunct **Jill Flanders-Crosby** joined us again this spring to teach sections of DANC 110: Dance Appreciation and DANC 360: Dance In Culture. She brings deep cultural and historical knowledge and movement exploration of various dance forms to all of our students.

We appreciate our dance adjuncts!



Guest Artists

LaVelle Smith Jr. / Kentucky to the World

The WKU Dance Program partnered with Kentucky to the World and the Warren County Public Library to present a special performance at the Capitol in downtown Bowling Green. This program brought the story of Louisville native, LaVelle Smith Jr., choreographer for Michael Jackson, to BG in “Legacy In Motion: LaVelle Smith’s Dance Journey from Kentucky to Pop Icons.” Our dancers had the opportunity to work with Smith and perform excerpts from “Ghost,” “Dangerous,” and a new work created for Kentucky to the World!



Katherine Kramer

We enjoyed an amazing week with Katherine Kramer who has been a vital presence in the resurgence and evolution of classic jazz and tap dance since the 1970s. The studios were filled with Incredible knowledge In lecture courses, movement explorations, and all levels of Tap and Jazz Dance technique. The rehearsal process with tappers in the WKU Dance Company provided a wonderful learning experience as well as a new choreographic work set on them for performance.



Yohanna Escamilla

Flamenco dancer Yohanna Escamilla worked with our dancers over a four day period. The studios were filled with incredible knowledge in Flamenco movement, history, and choreography. The rehearsal process with the WKU Dance Company provided a wonderful, warm, and fulfilling learning experience along with an original new piece of choreography for performance by the dancers.



Additional Guest Artist Experiences

NYC based choreographer and educator Alicia Pociask led a resume and dance reel workshop via Zoom. Dancers gained insight into industry expectations and enjoyed the networking opportunity.

During Fall 2025, **Sankofa African Drum & Dance** taught an African dance workshop to students, complete with live music.

Victor Alexander, director of the Chicago-based **Ruth Page Center for the Arts** taught a ballet and modern class and offered several dancers scholarships to the Ruth Page School of Dance International Dance Experience.

Dance alumna Kaleigh Hampton taught two dance conditioning classes during her time off from performing with **Mutual Dance Theatre**.

Gregory Hancock Dance Theatre held auditions for their Indiana company in Gordon Wilson Hall. Three of our graduating seniors will enjoy an internship with the company this summer!



Student Choreography Concerts

The Dance Project and *Last Chance to Dance* (fall and spring) are three concerts where students can showcase their choreography. *The Dance Project* is a formal adjudicated concert held early in the spring semester. *Last Chance to Dance* is an informal concert at the end of the semester where the Choreography I and II classes showcase their final projects, along with other selected dance performances, on stage one final time before the semester ends.



WinterDance: Candyland Adventures

The Dance Program brings magic to the stage In this family-friendly theatrical production. Characters from the nostalgic gameboard are reimaged In this faculty-choreographed concert that features ballet, modern, jazz, and tap dance.



Evening of Dance 2026

This faculty and guest artist choreographed mainstage dance concert, directed by Professor Clark, is a staple production of the Department of Theatre & Dance. The spring concert featured six original works of choreography including contemporary ballet, modern dance, jazz dance, classical tap dance, and Flamenco. Following tradition, senior WKU Dance Company members choreographed the finale providing a fun and energizing end to the concert.



NDEO-WKU Student Chapter

The WKU Student Chapter of the National Dance Education Organization continued their support of dance students and the dance degree program through dance advocacy, community engagement, movement workshops, fundraising, and peer support. This student organization does a wonderful job in creating leaders within the field of dance!



Summer Dance Intensive

July 19-25, 2026



We will hold our 11th annual WKU Summer Dance Intensive this summer. The event is designed for intermediate to advanced dancers (grades 9-12) as a unique opportunity to explore college-level dance and the WKU experience. Following the mission of the WKU Dance Program, students will be challenged as "thinking artists," with a variety of classes to enhance their technical and artistic skills. The program of study will include daily ballet, jazz, and modern dance technique classes along with coursework including pointe, tap, dance improvisation, dance history, and world dance forms. Daily discussions and events will highlight special interest topics designed to help prepare and inspire the pre-professional dancer. The week-long intensive will culminate in a performance featuring university faculty and guest artist choreography. This year we filled to capacity within the first two days of registration!



For more information visit the program's website:

<https://bit.ly/wku-dance>