

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLAN
DEPARTMENT OF DANCE
FACULTY OF FINE ARTS
YORK UNIVERSITY
updated January 2011

INTRODUCTION

During its last completed Undergraduate Program Review, the Department of Dance, Faculty of Fine Arts, expressed its desire to enhance the diversity of its faculty. The current faculty members are primarily female, with few racial/visible minorities. This distribution reflects the population from which most candidates qualified to teach ballet and modern dance, the technical mainstays of our (and most universities') current curriculum, are drawn.

Thus, we have achieved substantial female faculty representation corresponding to our overwhelmingly female undergraduate and graduate student population. However, as our curriculum itself diversifies, a process now in progress, and as new positions become available through creation, resignation, or retirement, we expect to be in a position where we can enhance our profile in other areas designated by the YUFA-York University Collective Agreement for 2009-2012 (Article 12.21) as affirmative action targets. In addition, now and in the future, our practices do and will conform to the non-discrimination requirements set forth in Article 12.20.

Our overall goals are to implement a policy that conforms to both the Collective Agreement and the best interests of our students and our discipline by actively seeking candidates from a broader range of groups and to commit to increasing our diversity while upholding principles of academic and professional excellence. We expect that we will be able to appoint several highly qualified persons in the targeted groups over the next six years. We have permission to make one new appointment this year and hope to make additional appointments in the wake of projected retirements. Five faculty members are currently over 60 and at least three are expected to retire over the next few years, opening up new positions.

ANALYSIS OF GENDER COMPOSITION

The following table shows a breakdown of the members of the Department by sex, type of appointment and rank in 2010-2011:

	Female	Male	% female
Tenured			
*Professor	4.33	0	100%
Assoc. Professor	5	1	83%
Probationary			
Asst. Professor	2	3	40%
Total Tenure Stream	11.33	4	74%

*Cross-appointment with the Department of English (2/3 English, 1/3 Dance).

In 2010/11, there are 11.33 females and 4 males. The Department also uses the services of part-time faculty as course directors. Our graduate students eligible to serve as TAs are predominately women in any given year.

The Department offers degree programs leading to the Honours BFA, 90-credit BA, MA, MFA and PhD. We have recently introduced the BA (Specialized Honours), which allows for a studies-based degree including World Dance practices and studies, and which it is hoped will attract both faculty and students from targeted groups. At present, at the Bachelor's level, approximately 95% of our full-time students are women, and at the Master's level, normally about 90% are women.

HIRING PRIORITIES

Longer term

Because the Department of Dance is a unit with 40% or more women and is highly likely to remain so, affirmative action provisions under 12.21 (b) of the 2009-2012 Collective Agreement come into play, such that "a candidate who is a member of a visible/racial minority, an aboriginal person or a person with a disability shall be offered the appointment unless a candidate who does not belong to those groups can be demonstrated to be superior."

Thus, as retirements or resignations allow us to hire longer-term CLAs and probationary-tenure stream faculty, we will make a concerted effort to recruit members of targeted/under-represented groups.

In a very small department, tenure-track appointments have historically been made on the basis of having at least one strong specialist in each field seen as necessary to mount a credible dance program. Our hiring of CLAs has historically been based on covering all high priority courses with the best people who can teach in several sub-fields at suitable times in our tightly-scheduled cohort-system curriculum. These practices, while likely to continue to some degree, are likely to be supplemented now that we have introduced the BA (Hons) and the PhD, both studies degrees that are not ballet/modern-based. Recently approved courses in world dance practices, popular culture, and dance and globalization will allow us to seek new appointments, whether tenure stream or CLA, from a much more racially diverse pool than has been possible with our prior ballet-modern emphasis.

The majority of our faculty members are now in their fifties and sixties and retirements will begin to have major impact; however, with the abolition of mandatory retirement some are choosing to not retire at 65. Increased enrolments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and the introduction of our PhD in Dance Studies may enable us to make new appointments. We thus will have the opportunity to redefine ourselves substantially over the next several years, and it is our intention to include in that redefinition a revision of our current gender and racial profile.

The launch of two new graduate programs in 2008, the MFA in choreography and dance dramaturgy, and the Ph.D. in dance studies, will have considerable impact on our definition of positions moving forward. This year, we have permission to make one new tenure-track appointment in dance education at the assistant/associate rank. This position offers an opportunity to improve our racial profile.

THE HIRING PROCESS

Planning appointments

Because we are a small department, decisions on what appointments will be sought are taken by the department as a whole on the basis of curricular needs. Typically, deliberations are held not only at department meetings but also at annual retreats. In our recent curricular revisions, we gave serious consideration to balancing curricular demands with our strong desire to increase the diversity of our faculty, recognizing that members of some targeted groups are likelier to specialize in some areas rather than others.

Proactive affirmative search

All ads will include the following language: *York University is an Affirmative Action Employer. The Affirmative Action Program can be found on York's website at www.yorku.ca/acadjobs or a copy can be obtained by calling the affirmative action office at 416-736-5713. All qualified candidates are encouraged to apply; however, Canadian citizens and Permanent Residents will be given priority. Temporary entry for citizens of the U.S.A. and Mexico may apply per the provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This position is subject to budgetary approval by the university.*

For all tenure-track and contractually limited appointments, we place advertisements in *CAUT Bulletin* and *University Affairs*. In addition, advertisements or listings are placed in local and national dance publications for all tenure-track positions and locally for CLAs. The current publishing climate in Canada essentially limits this to *Dance International* and *The Dance Current* on the national scene. We are also able to list postings on websites

Transition Resource Centre and Dance Umbrella of Ontario. The Search Committee asks all members of the department to activate their personal networks of contacts to identify qualified potential applicants and urge them to apply. We make use of appropriate listservs and contact alumnae of our graduate program. We keep the files of candidates who have previously applied for positions for at least one year and contact them if there are appropriate positions available in the department.

While we do not always advertise specifically in the United States, we do encourage faculty through their network contacts to spread the word to leading university dance programs, companies, and organizations in the United States and Europe. We ask for their assistance in identifying qualified applicants and encouraging them to apply.

Applications are acknowledged as they come in, and all applicants are e-mailed the form for members of a targeted group and invited to self-identify. Applicants will be informed that if they do not choose to self-identify, they will not be able to benefit from our affirmative action policy, since the committee cannot make a decision about their status as a member of a designated group.

The Search Committee

In the Department of Dance, the Search Committee is normally¹ comprised of two faculty members elected by the Department, the Chair of the Department, and an additional faculty member named by the Chair. A fifth member, from outside the Department, ideally with appropriate expertise in the area of the advertised appointment, is selected by the departmental members. All faculty members of the committee are in the tenure-track stream. When possible, one or more members of the committee will have special expertise in the area of the appointment. Additional input from department faculty members is solicited at several stages of the search.

The majority of committee members are female. The Chair names a tenured member of the committee as the Affirmative Action Representative to monitor the process and to ensure that members of targeted groups (qualified visible minority or aboriginal candidates, if applying) are short-listed. Two students (preferably one graduate and one fourth-year undergraduate) normally are also included on the committee. Student members of the committee are specifically charged with attending the technique class and/or lecture of short-listed candidates and to gather input from students and report their findings to the Search Committee.

Additionally, effective 2009/10, there is a Dean's representative on all tenure stream search committees.

All members of the committee are voting members.

EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES

When tenure track appointments are anticipated, the Search Committee meets in early fall to draft appropriate advertisements, which are then forwarded to the Dean for approval and placed in appropriate publications and widely distributed.

The Search Committee also discusses the conduct of the search and considers general issues about the range of possible ways to meet the Department's staffing needs. Decisions are made about the methods to be employed to evaluate applicants.

For candidates primarily in the studio area the following are usually considered: education and professional dance training, professional career, teaching experience, 3 letters of recommendation, videotapes of choreography. For candidates primarily in the theory area the following are usually considered: academic education, teaching experience, 3 letters of recommendation, publications. Since most recent positions require some combination of both studio and theory, some combination of both sets of criteria is considered. A form is used to record the above information to serve as a basis for comparison. Depending on the nature of the position, this form may change from position to position and from year to year.

To date, the majority of applicants for both studio and theory positions have been white females, and we anticipate this trend, reflecting the general population of those who train in ballet and modern dance, will continue to some extent. However, with the new BA (Hons), World Dance courses, and PhD in Dance Studies, we expect an increased percentage of applicants in a targeted group.

After the closing date, all members of faculty in the tenure-track stream are invited to review the files individually and make recommendations to the Search Committee. According to current procedures, both Canadian/Landed Immigrant and other applications will be considered for inclusion on a short list, but the committee will understand that a non-Canadian can be hired only if no qualified Canadians/Landed Immigrants are available. After the files have been reviewed, the committee members meet to compile a short list of candidates who seem to fulfill the criteria. While the recommendations of the faculty "at large" may shape and guide the committee's decision, the final decision rests with the committee. Members of targeted groups who self-identify and fulfill the criteria for the position will receive special consideration in the construction of the short list. Effective 2009/10, the Dean is to approve all candidates recommended for the short list.

THE INTERVIEW

The Department of Dance interviews all short-listed candidates for tenure-track and contractually limited appointments. Where time and/or distance are a factor, an interview with a candidate for a contractually limited appointment may be conducted via telephone, using either speaker phones or conference calling.

For tenure-track appointments, interview schedules are prepared that allow each candidate to spend a day on campus. When the interview date of each candidate is confirmed, a memorandum is sent to all Dance faculty members and the Dance Students' Association informing them of the visit. A specific itinerary is prepared and followed for each candidate. The itinerary of a candidate in the studio area would normally include teaching a technique class and meeting with students. The candidate would also meet with faculty members to discuss her artistic work and would be interviewed by the Search Committee. Additional interviews are arranged with the Chair, Dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts, and the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies. For a candidate in the theory area, a lecture or seminar on their research might be substituted for the technique class. Candidates who will likely teach both theory and studio may be asked to teach a studio class and present a lecture.

During the interview, Search Committee members ask the candidate a set of questions agreed upon earlier, and the candidate is given the opportunity to ask questions about the Department and the nature of the position.

In our interviews we will do our best to demonstrate to every candidate that the York Dance Department will provide a supportive environment. Where appropriate, we shall explain the general policies of the University, and the existence of Daycare, Counselling and Disability Services, the Centre for Human Rights, and the SexGen York Committee, indicating York's commitment to an inclusive campus culture.

After the interview, the Search Committee may undertake to solicit written comments from the faculty and students regarding the candidate's presentation.

At this stage a final ranking will be determined. Following the completion of interviews, all the candidates' files are brought up to date with the addition of notes made during the interviews, reports made on the presentation or class, and any other written material generated as a result of the visit. Members of the Search Committee review the files and then compare and discuss the results. The committee works by consensus, and failing that a vote is held. In the end, short-listed candidates are deemed acceptable or not acceptable. All "acceptable" candidates are ranked in order of preference. Sometimes there is a clear "first choice" and sometimes even a clear rank order. At other times there is a need for further discussion and compromise. The Committee's ranking will recognize that a non-Canadian can be recommended only if there are no qualified Canadian applicants.

In accord with affirmative action policy, we will recommend a candidate from a targeted group unless a majority of the committee agrees that another candidate not a member of such a group is clearly superior.

explain why we deem that chosen candidate superior to the best-qualified applicant from a targeted group.

Emergency hirings of sessional CLAs

In cases where emergent conditions demand rapid hiring, especially over the summer, some of the normal procedures detailed above may not be possible. For instance, the selection committee may be smaller than normal, there may be no student representation on the committee, the holding of a technique class attended by students will likely not be possible, and all members of the department may not be consulted on the decision. However, the normal advertising procedures and provisions for self-identification as a member of a targeted group will remain, and the process will in no way diminish the special consideration to be given to such applicants. Normal procedures will be abridged only in an emergency, and only in filling a contractually limited position.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION DOCUMENTATION

Before making an offer to a short-listed candidate, the appointment file will be forwarded to the Implementation Committee. It will include a memo documenting the search process and explaining why the recommended candidate was chosen over other candidates with different combinations of strengths. When no member of a visible minority or aboriginal is recommended, the Committee will include evidence that affirmative-action principles were applied throughout the process of search, short listing, and final selection. The Committee will provide summary data about all visible minority and aboriginal candidates and an explicit comparison between the recommended candidate and the two strongest visible minority or aboriginal applicants.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

The Department of Dance is well aware that it is in an almost unique position at York University in having 74% female tenure stream faculty. This position reflects the proportion of women as opposed to men who seek university degrees in the field of dance, whether ballet, modern, or theory. We are, nevertheless, alert to the need to do our best to achieve a balance of genders in faculty and student body alike, and are proactive in seeking out male applicants as students and faculty. We have made progress toward a more balanced gender distribution; two of our past four hires have been males. Traditionally low salaries for both professionals and academics in dance in many respects mitigates against the field being particularly attractive to men (or indeed many women).

We are also aware that we have fewer visible minorities or aboriginal tenure stream faculty than we would like. In large part, this lack is a result of the fact that comparatively few people in these categories train for a career in ballet or modern dance, standard components of most university programs. As we alter the curriculum and/or create new or retirement replacement positions in world dance or dance studies, we will likely have a somewhat enhanced chance for success in attracting racial/visible minority candidates.

The issue of candidates with disabilities poses a more difficult problem in that most appointments in dance involve teaching some studio courses requiring substantial energetic demonstration of movement in class. Moreover, three, and perhaps more, members of our faculty have developed physical disabilities we have managed to accommodate.

Nevertheless, we welcome applications from candidates whose disabilities do not prevent them from teaching in the area in which we are seeking to make an appointment. Thus, a studio teacher of dance would need to be sighted to offer suitable corrections and suggestions, but a theory teacher would not, on the other hand, both

judged by their possession of the abilities needed to fulfill the requirements of the position, not by incidental disabilities.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All members of the Search Committee are expected to inform the Chair of the Committee if they have a potential conflict of interest, such as being a close friend or relative of a candidate, or a thesis supervisor. The Committee must determine how to resolve the matter before short listing candidates. Possible solutions might include replacing the member with a conflict of interest by another faculty member, or having the member abstain from voting. Information about the conflict and how it was resolved so that the conflict of interest was mitigated will be included in the report to the Dean concerning the search process.

Approved by the Department in June, 2001; updated in November 2003, November 2006, October 2007, and January 2011.
