

*A Member of The  
Texas State University System*

## **SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY**

# ***DANCE PROGRAM***

### **Mission**

*It is the mission of the Dance Program at Sam Houston State University to provide a performance-oriented curriculum of artistic and scholarly pursuits which is sufficiently balanced, varied, and integrated to allow students to choose from a range of dance-related careers and which prepares them to compete successfully in their chosen area of specialization.*

### **Contact for Information**

Jennifer Pontius

Dance Program Coordinator

Sam Houston State University  
Huntsville, TX 77341-2269

Telephone: 936-294-1300

E-mail: [dnc\\_jkp@shsu.edu](mailto:dnc_jkp@shsu.edu)

**Updated FALL 2009**

**Location** SHSU is located in the beautiful piney woods of East Texas, one hour north of Houston and within three hours of Dallas and Austin.

**General Information** The student body of SHSU numbers approximately 16,795 of which about 2,100 are graduate students. GRE scores are required for graduate admission. Early admission is available. In-state tuition is \$2,697 per semester, while non-resident tuition is \$6,021 per semester for 12 semester credit hours. Room and board in university housing is available for about \$3,041 per semester. Financial aid is available through the university, and the Dance faculty award Performance Scholarships by special audition.

## Full-Time Faculty

**Jennifer Pontius** Coordinator, Assistant Professor of Dance, M.F.A. Florida State University; M.A. California State University, Dominguez Hills; B.A. University of Alabama at Birmingham. She has been a member of both ballet and modern dance companies, including the Pacific Dance Ensemble and Donna Sternberg, (both in Los Angeles) and The Birmingham Ballet in Birmingham, Alabama. She was featured in the Ilona Vera Instructional Ballet video. In her hometown, Birmingham, Alabama, she co-founded Synaxis. She has taught and choreographed at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa; Birmingham-Southern College; The South Bay Ballet in Los Angeles; and Sam Houston State University. Teaching areas include ballet, pointe, classical repertoire, modern, improvisation, choreography, and criticism and analysis.

**Cindy Gratz** Professor of Dance, Ph.D. in Dance (Performance Emphasis) from New York University, B.A. and M.A. in Dance (Performance Emphasis) from UCLA. At the age of two, she began hula training with her mother who is a dance faculty emeritus from Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. She rode elephants with Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey Circus, prior to touring the USA as a solo concert modern dance artist. She founded TEXAS WORLD DANCE in 2001 which supports dance for the older adult-The Prime Time

Dancers; multi-cultural dance-The Polynesian Dance Review of Huntsville, Texas;  
and social relevant concert modern dance-The Gratz Dance Ensemble.

***Dane Eugene Nicolay*** Professor of Dance, M.F.A. and B.G.S. Texas Christian University. He has been a member of the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the Houston Ballet, the Dayton Ballet, Contemporary Dancers Canada and Space/Dance/Theatre. His choreography has been recognized for excellence by the American College Dance Festival Association, the Mid America Dance Network, and Regional Dance America.

***Jonathan Charles*** Assistant Professor in Dance, M.F.A. Sam Houston State University, B.A. University of Houston at Clear Lake. He has performed on Broadway and National tours of such shows as A Chorus Line, The Pirates of Penzance, Jesus Christ Superstar, Showboat, and Mame, with Juliet Prowse. Regional theatre appearances include Theatre Under the Stars in Houston, The Seattle Fifth Avenue Theatre, the MUNY Opera of St. Louis, Papermill Playhouse of New Jersey, the Alley Theater of Houston. He has also taught at the University of Houston, Fancy Dancers in New York, STEPS in New York, the Jewish Community Center in Houston, and TUTS Humphrey Musical Theater School. He teaches all levels of ballet, tap, and jazz, and currently directs the Musical Theatre Workshop for the Musical Theatre Program at SHSU.

***Andy Noble*** Assistant professor of Dance, M.F.A. Florida State University, B.A. from the University of South Florida. His performing experience includes six years with Repertory Dance Theatre (RDT), where he performed in over forty choreographic works by such noted masters as Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham and Jose Limon. He also had the honor of working first-hand with many cutting edge contemporary and international artists such as Gideon Obarzanek (Chunky Move), Jo Stromgren and Zvi Gotheiner. Andy's choreography has been presented nationally by such organizations as Seattle's on the Boards, RDT, New York's University Settlement and Florida Dance Festival. He has served as a faculty member at the University of South Florida and Western Washington University.

# DANCE PROGRAM

Sam Houston State University is home of one of the oldest and most successful Dance Programs in the state of Texas. The SHSU Dance Program has had nearly 30 works selected for the American College Dance Festival Association Regional Festival Gala Concerts and has been invited to seven of the nine National College Dance Festivals which showcase the best of American college dance at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C.

Graduates of the program are currently performing on Broadway, with dance companies, and touring with professional road shows and cruise lines; teaching, directing and choreographing in university and high school dance programs; working in health-related fields such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, chiropractic medicine and massage therapy; or are continuing with graduate work.

**Facilities** Physical facilities include five spacious studios equipped with variable speed CD players, video cameras and monitors, and pianos for ballet and modern classes. The semiformal SHSU Dance Theater seats 120. It has a 48 channel lighting system, high fidelity sound equipment, and step academic seating.

**Faculty** The SHSU Dance Program has five full-time faculty members, four adjunct positions, and seven graduate teaching assistants. Master classes and residencies by guest artists and other dance professionals are offered regularly. Recent guest artists have included Luis Montero, Patti Obey, Art Bridgman/Myrna Packer, and Bill Evans and Joy Kellman.

**Performance Opportunities** Performance opportunities in dance include two formal dance concert series per academic year, as well as musicals, student produced concerts, and regional and national dance festivals. Dance Spectrum provides student touring opportunities. Dance Spectrum performs in either the 400-seat University Theatre Center or in the Dance Theater.

**Degrees Offered** The program offers the Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA), Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre (BFA-Mus.Th.) with Dance

Emphasis, and Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degrees. Secondary teaching certification is also available through the university. The program serves over 100 Dance majors.

**Admission** Admission to the BA and BFA Program is by audition only. Entrance auditions are held in conjunction with scholarship auditions in November and February of each year. Admission to the MFA program is based on Graduate Record Examination Scores, Undergraduate Grade Point Average, a videotaped portfolio of choreographic works, and an on-campus interview and audition which coincides with the February scholarship audition.

**Curriculum** Dance auditions are held each semester on the first class day to determine company membership and to place dancers in their appropriate technique level. Four levels of ballet and modern dance technique are offered. The curriculum includes Choreography and Improvisation, Dance History, Dance Pedagogy, Dance Criticism and Analysis, Social and Folk dance forms, Repertory, World Dance, Research Methods in Dance, and Body Conditioning, as well as numerous popular dance forms such as Jazz, Hip-Hop and Musical Theatre dance. All dance majors are required to attend seven to twelve hours of technique each week. In addition, company members rehearse up to sixteen hours per week.

**Dance Requirements** All dance majors are required to register for Crew for a minimum of four semesters.

Candidates for the Bachelor of Arts degree in Dance must be in at least one dance technique course each semester and must complete at least one semester of DNC 333, DNC 334, and DNC 430.

Candidates for the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Dance must be in both ballet and modern dance technique each semester, and must complete at least two semesters each of DNC 430, DNC 433, and DNC 434.

DNC 333, 334, 430, 433, and 434 are open only by audition or permission of the instructor.

## **COURSE OFFERINGS**

- DNC 110 Dance Workshop
- DNC 126 Theatre Dance Forms
- DNC 127 Improvisational Technique
- DNC 172 Dance As Art
- DNC 232 Social & Folk Dance Forms
- DNC 233 Beginning Ballet Technique
- DNC 234 Beginning Modern Dance Technique
- DNC 272 Dance History
- DNC 273 World Dance: Exploring Cultures
- DNC 276 Choreography I
- DNC 333 Intermediate Ballet Technique
- DNC 334 Intermediate Modern Dance Technique
- DNC 374 Principles of Dance Technique
- DNC 376 Choreography II
- DNC 430 Repertory
- DNC 433 Advanced Ballet Technique
- DNC 434 Advanced Modern Dance Technique
- DNC 472 Dance Criticism & Analysis
- DNC 474 Dance Pedagogy
- DNC 476 Choreography III
- DNC 492 Seminar in Dance

- DNC 493 Independent Study
- DNC 533 Development of Adv. Skills in Dance
- DNC 560 Seminar in Dance Production
- DNC 571 Theory of Dance
- DNC 576 Contemporary Dance Composition
- DNC 577 Independent Studies
- DNC 578 Adv. Comp. in Contemporary Dance
- DNC 585 Research Methods in Dance
- DNC 698 & 699 Thesis

**Scholarships** Merit-based performance scholarships from \$250 to \$1,500 are available to students who qualify in terms of dance ability and maintain a minimum overall grade point average of 2.8. Out of state Students who receive \$1,000 scholarship or more may qualify for in-state tuition. Scholarship Auditions are held in November and February for the academic year which begins the following September. Audition information is posted on our website prior to audition dates.