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Brief research report

Where Beauty Meets Truth: Ballet Dancers at Fordham University

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Abstract. From its origin in 1968, one unique mission of Fordham University’s new campus in Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts has been to educate performing artists, including ballet dancers. What is these dancers’ experience with Fordham? This study offers: (a) a concise history of this “marriage of beauty with truth” in Lincoln Center; (b) how the unique educational needs of dancers were addressed by the university; (c) a quantitative assessment using an 80-point student satisfaction survey found 28 NYCB dancers scored significantly higher (mean = 58.5) than 1,365 other Fordham Lincoln Center students (mean = 53.2, *t*-test, *p* < .001); (d) a qualitative assessment revealed different paths that 20 acclaimed NYCB dancers took to apply their Fordham education to second careers in a wide array of specialties: from dance and the arts to management, education, law, psychology, and medicine.

Key words: dancers, Fordham University, New York City Ballet, urban education, 360-degree feedback, student attitudes

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Introduction

Since its debut in 1964, the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts quickly became “a beacon to the world” (Polisi, 2022) – a pre-eminent global symbol of high culture. Its sprawling 16.3 acres occupy four blocks in the very heart of New York City (from 62 to 66 Street, and Broadway to Tenth Avenue). It now houses 30 indoor and outdoor facilities that bring together all varieties of music, dance, live theatre, film, broadcasting, visual and performing arts. Three points are nota-



ble here: (a) the unusual origins of Lincoln Center, (b) how Fordham University became involved, and (c) serving the dancers of the New York City Ballet.

Lincoln Center is a world-class cultural center that now hosts an estimated 5-million visitors each year. Yet the brilliant vision of this unprecedented multi-arts cultural complex simply did not exist before 1955, when several venerable organizations were searching for new homes: (a) The New York Philharmonic (formed in 1842) was soon losing its lease at Carnegie Hall in 1958; (b) The Metropolitan Opera (formed in 1883) had to leave its aged home on Broadway and 39th Street; (c) The Julliard School of Music (formed in 1926) was also seeking a more suitable home; (d) The NYC Ballet (formed by George Balanchine in 1948) was also ready to move from its financially troubled home in the City Center for Music and Drama at 131 West 55 Street. Many civic and political leaders rallied behind two City visionaries – fund-raiser John D. Rockefeller III, and urban planner Robert Moses – to achieve a bold new vision of one world-class cultural complex that would bring high arts to the general public. But these supporters faced steep challenges to secure immense funding, precious land, and popular support.¹

Fordham University was formed in 1841 on the Rose Hill estate in the northern Bronx, over 20 kilometers from midtown Manhattan (Gannon, 1967). It was founded by John Hughes, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of the New York region, as the first Catholic college in the northeastern USA. Within five years, Hughes recruited priests in the Society of Jesus to make Fordham “the Jesuit University of New York” – based squarely on Jesuit values such as “cura personalis” (the whole person), “magis” (striving for excellence), and a broad liberal arts education (Schroth, 2002). The Bronx was not part of New York City until 1898, when it merged with four other boroughs (Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, Richmond) to form what is now New York City.

Starting in 1906, Fordham began to rent prime spaces in downtown Manhattan – such as the Woolworth Building and 302 Broadway – to offer ambitious New Yorkers a Jesuit education in its five schools of law, social service, business, education, undergraduate studies. But this “Fordham downtown” became increasingly impossible with rising rents in Manhattan (Shelley, 2016). In the 1950s, Fordham President Lawrence J. McGinley was openly seeking to purchase an affordable space for a more permanent campus in Manhattan. McGinley welcomed Robert Moses’ invitation to incorporate Fordham University into his emerging vision of a Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. McGinley became a supporter of this Lincoln Center vision, and later noted: “We were building a neighborhood, where... the world of ideas could join the world of art, and truth lend strength to beauty.” Fordham University at Lincoln Center opened in 1968 on 8 acres at West 60 to 62 Street, with the tallest building on the Lincoln Center campus – a towering 13-stories with fluted walls to resemble its LC neighbors.

Since Fordham University at Lincoln Center (FULC) opened its doors in 1968, it has thrived. As of 2023, FULC has 9,429 students, more than the 7,286 students in the original Bronx campus. From its start, the mission of FULC is to educate

¹ Umbrell, J. (2018, Nov 14). Robert Moses, friend of Fordham, left a complex legacy. *Fordham Observer*. Retrieved July 14, 2023, from <https://fordhamobserver.com/36460/recent/features/robert-moses-friend-of-fordham-left-a-complex-legacy/>

a broad array of urban professionals near their Manhattan workplace. Yet the special needs of dancers has created an unusual bond between FULC and the dancers of New York City Ballet.

Ballet dancers. Across the world’s 193 nations, there are literally thousands of regional and national ballet companies, each proud of its own distinctive panache. Certainly, dozens of these troupes stand out in different ways, such as the Bolshoi in Moscow, Royal Ballet in London, Paris Opera Ballet, Dutch National Ballet (Amsterdam), Miami City Ballet, and New York City Ballet. Despite their great diversity, ballet dancers everywhere share much in common (Wulff, 2020), in at least four ways.

1. *Dedication.* Immense dedication is required for a career in professional ballet. Most families begin training their youngsters early, with years of intense practice for highly competitive openings.

2. *Brevity.* Unlike other performing artists (actors, musicians, singers), ballet dancers are limited to a brief career of 10 to 20 years due to the physical demands of dance, and a serious injury may abruptly end a dance career even earlier.

3. *Second careers.* As a result, ballet dancers must typically think ahead to a second career in their thirties (Geben, 2002). With luck, this may build on their valuable dance training – such as dance teacher, choreographer, or administrator of ballet. Alternately, they may prefer a college degree for a chance to enter another career in their thirties (Hamilton et al., 2002). Several organizations have helped with this transition, such as Dance On, and the Dancers Transition Resource Center.²

4. *Challenges.* Any ballet dancer who seeks a college education faces clear challenges. Their dance performance demands total dedication, typically a hectic schedule performing six days weekly for demanding audiences who expect superb performances. During his 35 years as Artistic Director of NYCB (1948–1983), George Balanchine reportedly discouraged his dancers’ college education and even marriage, if these could detract from their dance performance – a view that no longer prevails. As of 2018, “More than half of the members of City Ballet are [now] pursuing or have received undergraduate degrees. [One dancer] noted ‘I don’t think it’s frowned upon to cultivate this outside part of you, as perhaps it was in the past. I think it can enhance your work and your life.’ ”³

Dancers at Fordham. Fordham has carefully adapted its programs to suit the busy careers of urban professionals, and there is no better example of this than NYCB, in several ways: (a) *Proximity.* Of course, dancers must walk barely 1,500 feet from their LC stage to their Fordham classroom; (b) *Scheduling.* Since Monday night is the “day off” for LC performers, FULC has been careful to schedule key courses on Monday nights, so dancers can complete their degree with Monday-only courses; (c) *Discount.* Like all full-time LC performers, dancers are entitled to a 33% discount in their tuition; (d) *Content.* In some cases, Fordham was able to adjust its curriculum to suit dancers. A prime example of this occurred in 1998–2000,

² DTRC. (2017). *Annual report*. Dancer Transition Resource Center.

³ Kourlas, G. (2018, May 31). Clearing the stage for a big graduation number at City Ballet. *The New York Times*. Retrieved July 14, 2023, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/31/arts/dance/new-york-city-ballet-dancers-graduate-from-college.html>

when retired dancer Dr. Linda Hamilton agreed to develop a new course on “Performance Psychology” for Monday nights. Hamilton attracted many performing artists into this new Fordham course, where she used her own new book, “The person behind the mask,” as a textbook (Hamilton, 1997), and invited guest experts like Dr. Kate Hays from Toronto. Professor Hamilton was an alumna of both NYCB and FULC, who completed her PhD in clinical psychology and became a noted author, therapist, columnist for *Dance Magazine*,⁴ wellness coach for NYCB,⁵ consultant to Fordham’s dance program, and author of three books to promote the well-being of performing artists (Hamilton, 1997, 2002; Hamilton & New York City Ballet, 2008).

In 2018, FULC hosted its first and joyous diploma ceremony specifically for NYCB dancers (Stoelker, 2018).⁶

NYCB typically numbers almost 100 professional dancers at all levels – about 20 principal dancers, 20 soloists, and 60 Corps de Ballet. These are among the world’s elite ballet dancers.⁷ Of these, an estimated 20 to 40 percent typically study at FULC, often taking the same courses together. They are virtually all part-time students in Fordham’s School of Professional and Continuing Studies (PCS), who attend either on Monday evenings, or weekday mornings, summers, or now online – sometimes taking over 10 years to complete their baccalaureate degree with one course each semester.

The Fordham experience. One’s college years should be a time for mental and spiritual growth. “How do students in general, and dancers in particular, view their Fordham experience?”

One way to answer this is simply to survey their views. Yet such student surveys are rare, even though this input seems valuable to shape more effective educational programs. In contrast, successful corporations and nonprofit organizations now rely on this “360-degree feedback” to compete in the world of business. They conduct an anonymous survey of their employees each year, to identify weaknesses within the organization (Levy, 2017, pp. 128–131). Over 90% of Fortune 500 firms now conduct annual employee attitude surveys to welcome workers’ input, monitor trends in their organizational health, and benefit from new ideas from workers. Such 360-degree feedback is surprisingly rare in even the best educational organizations, despite its value to compare schools (Formozova, Urmanche, 2014), or programs within one school (Voitko, Takooshian, 2017).

In 2002, Fordham researchers published encouraging findings from a survey of 39 Fordham NYCB alumni on the question of “second careers,” which found that “75% of the group stated that college education helped them to get a job,

⁴ Crawford, N. (2003, December). Raising the barre. *APA Monitor*. Retrieved July 14, 2023, from <https://www.apa.org/monitor/dec03/barre>

⁵ DeAngelis, T. (2014, June). Artistic expression. *APA Monitor*. Retrieved July 14, 2023, from <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2014/06/arts-artist>

⁶ Stoelker, T. (2018, May 30). New York City ballet dancers hold first Fordham diploma ceremony. *Fordham Now*. Retrieved July 14, 2023, from <https://news.fordham.edu/commencement/2018/new-york-city-ballet-dancers-hold-first-fordham-diploma-ceremony/#prettyPhoto>

⁷ New York City Ballet. (n.d.). *A ballet doesn't – can't – exist without dancers*. Retrieved July 14, 2023, from <https://www.nycballet.com/discover/meet-our-dancers/>

and almost half (43%) had established a satisfying second career” (Hamilton et al., 2002, p. 22).

In this study, we used quantitative and qualitative methods to compare the views of 28 NYCB Fordham students with 1,365 other students at FULC. We also interviewed a handful of noted dancers to comment on their Fordham experience. Our hypothesis was simply that NYCB dancers who “take the leap” for a college degree would express more positive views than other Fordham students about their college experience.

Method

Materials. This research used a standardized 360-degree feedback Student Survey in three parts: (a) a brief introduction, (b) a 20-item student satisfaction scale, with four 5-item subscales (facilities, professors, students, other), and (c) 16 biodata items and qualitative questions. The 20 items were scored 0 (low) to 4 (high), so the four 5-item scales vary from 0–20, and the total scale from 0–80 (Table 1).

The reliability of the five scales was assessed by Cronbach's alpha and proved moderate to high for these brief five-item scales: Facilities $\alpha = .64$, Professors $\alpha = .80$, Students $\alpha = .71$, Other $\alpha = .57$, Total $\alpha = .85$.

Participants were 28 NYCB dancers earning their baccalaureate at FULC, in its School of Professional and Continuing Studies (PCS). Their biodata appears in Table 1. They were 90% women, 100% employed full-time, 100% studying part-time, 0% live in campus dorms, 64% take classes in the evening, studying for a mean of 6 years at Fordham. These 28 dancers were compared with 1,365 FULC students who had previously completed the same Student Survey.

Procedure. Fordham NYCB students were invited in person by a fellow dancer (Unity Phelan) to express their personal views of Fordham in an anonymous survey. This took fewer than 10 minutes to complete. All respondents were offered a later summary of the findings. Their responses were coded in SPSS for later analysis.

Results

Quantitative. On the 20-item scale in Table 1, the range for each item was 0 (dislike) to 4 (like), so any mean above 2.0 is favorable. Three points are clear.

(a) In general, the 1,365 FULC students felt positive on 18 of the 20 items, including all 5 items about faculty and about other students. Their scores varied from 5 up to 80, with a mean of 53.23, and SD of 10.1.

(b) The 28 NYCB dancers also scored positively, above 2.0 on all 20 items. Their scores varied from 47–78, with a mean of 58.54 and SD of 7.1.

(c) Based on independent-sample t-tests, the 28 dancers scored significantly different on 9 of these 20 items, and all 9 of these were higher than other FULC students. Not surprisingly, dancers scored far higher on several items: availability of faculty (#10), helpful deans (#18), and location of the campus (#19), and reasonable tuition (#20). This also included three of the four subscales (facilities, students, other). The 80-point total scale was significantly higher for dancers (mean = 58.54) than other FULC students (53.23, *t*-test, $p < .001$). This confirms the original hypothesis that NYCB students clearly valued their Fordham experience.

Table 1

Comparison of mean attitudes of NYCB dancers with other FULC students

Overall, <i>n</i> = 1,365	Dancers, <i>n</i> = 28	Difference	Items
“Overall, I am satisfied with Fordham...”			
1.71	2.14	+	1. Cafeteria
2.69	3.29	++	2. Library
2.13	2.61	+	3. Student services
2.82	2.68		4. Campus security staff
2.57	2.54		5. Computer facilities
11.92	13.18	+	FACILITIES (range = 0 to 20) (α = .635)
“Most professors at Fordham...”			
3.17	3.29		6. Are interested in their students’ education
2.95	3.14		7. Present course material in a stimulating way
3.25	3.39		8. Are an expert in their subject
3.06	3.18		9. Have high morale
3.08	3.36	++	10. Are available to students outside the classroom
15.50	16.36		PROFESSORS (range = 0 to 20) (α = .800)
“About Fordham students...”			
2.97	2.82		11. They are hard-working
2.80	3.29	++	12. I like the diversity among them
2.11	2.71	++	13. There is a sense of “college life” among students on campus
2.95	3.07		14. They are friendly
2.80	2.64		15. They are well-prepared for college work
13.63	14.54	+	STUDENTS (range = 0 to 20) (α = .707)
2.51	2.36		16. The student organizations add much to activities on campus
2.09	2.11		17. Academically, Fordham is comparable to an elite school
2.57	3.36	++	18. Deans seem available and helpful to students
3.42	3.89	++	19. The location of this campus is very good
1.60	2.75	++	20. Fordham tuition and fees are reasonable next to other schools
12.18	14.46	++	OTHER (range = 0 to 20) (α = .567)
53.23	58.54	++	TOTAL (range = 0 to 80) (α = .849)
Biodata			
0.65	2.00	++	Employment (0 = no, 1 = part-time, 2 = full-time)
1.89	6.07	++	Years at Fordham
1.89	1.00	--	Attendance (1 = part-time, 2 = full-time)
62%	90%	++	Women
28%	0%	--	Live in Fordham dorms
1.36	1.64	++	Primary class time (1 = Day, 2 = Evening)
16%	0%	--	International student

Note: Difference – dancers’ mean is significantly higher/lower at $p < .05$ (+/-) or $p < .01$ (++/--).

Qualitative. These quantitative findings concurred with qualitative information – written or oral comments by these NYCB dancers and a few Fordham deans and faculty. These comments were uniformly positive at every turn. (a) Several dancers echoed Delia Peters’ gratitude, that “I love Fordham. It made me a better-rounded person.” (b) About second careers, many echoed Cameron Dieck, that “Without steady support from Fordham, I would not have gained the credentials that allowed me to step into a banking career upon retiring from New York City Ballet.” (c) Alumnus Jonathan Stafford noted, “Without Fordham, I would not have the toolkit necessary to perform my current role as the Artistic Director of the New York City Ballet.” (d) Three Fordham deans echoed Glen Redpath’s ob-

ervation, that “Dancers were invariably at the top of their class despite their challenges,” and Professor Andrew Clark that “Dancers are amazing in what they bring into their courses.” (e) Mutual admiration was common among NYCB students and their professors. One clear example is offered by Professor Howard Krukofsky, who taught history to over 100 NYCB dancers during his 50 years from 1970–2020, and admired dancers’ invariable grace as well as “fierce discipline.” Krukofsky vividly recalled “April 30, 1987, when my family visited a NYCB performance for my 50th birthday; we were invited backstage where Director Peter Martins joined a dozen of his NYCB alumni to salute me with a birthday cake” – quite a testimony of a bond between this professor and his alumni.

Six themes. These many diverse comments fit here into six clear themes about dancers’ Fordham experience. (1) *Pressure*. NYCB dancers already feel pressure to perform six days a week for demanding audiences. This naturally increases when a dancer opts for a college degree, with the added challenges of attending class, studying for exams, and being judged by their professors (Pulinkala, 2011). (2) *Scheduling* is a common challenge, due to dancers’ ever-changing rehearsals and performances. (3) “*Magis*.” Fordham faculty invariably praised dancers as superb students in every way – attitude, punctuality, performance – what Jesuits term “magis,” or the striving for excellence. In one article on “six reasons why ballet dancers make awesome employees,” dancer Sarah Jukes (2017) explained that ballet training makes dancers teachable, flexible, fast learners, always prepared, work hard, and team players. (4). “*Cura personalis*.” Many dancers described their liberal education as a welcome respite from their highly focused ballet training. This exemplified another Jesuit value of “cura personalis” – concern for development of the whole person in body, mind, and spirit. (5) *Gratitude*. Most NYCB dancers expressed gratitude to Fordham deans and faculty for their cooperation to make college accessible to them, despite these challenges. (6) *Achievement*. Despite their heavy obligations to NYCB, dancers soared in their academic achievements. In Table 2, we see a high proportion of NYCB dancers achieved high honors from Fordham, on their way to prosperous second careers, both inside and far outside the world of dance.

Table 2

Twenty celebrated NYCB dancers who studied at Fordham

NYCB dance student	Later second career achievements
Dena Abergel, 2001, English, Summa Cum Laude, Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society	Abergel was a dancer in NYCB Corps de Ballet. She went on to be the NYCB Children’s Repertory Director and on the faculty of School of American Ballet. https://www.denaabergel.com/about-me
Sara Adams, 2019, Psycho-Social Development, Summa Cum Laude, Psi Chi and Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Societies	Adams continues her career as a soloist with NYCB. https://www.hvusoundmovement.com/post/dancer-of-the-month-february-2022-sara-adams https://www.nycballet.com/discover/meet-our-dancers/soloists/sara-adams/
Faye Arthurs, 2012, English, Fordham Class Valedictorian, Summa Cum Laude	Arthurs retired from NYCB Corps de Ballet. She now writes as dance columnist and critic. http://www.thoughtsfromthepaint.com/bio.html https://sab.org/scenes/becoming-a-cyber-ballet-connoisseur/
Peter Boal, n.d., Art History	Boal joined NYCB in 1983 under Balanchine and retired in 2005 as a principal dancer. He went on to be an author and the Artistic Director of the Pacific Northwest Ballet. https://www.pnb.org/aboutpnb/peter-boal/ https://www.pnb.org/blog/ballet-book-rec-peter-boals-new-book-illusions-of-camelot-a-memoir/

Table 2, continuation

NYCB dance student	Later second career achievements
Olivia Boisson, 2020, English Language and Literature	Boisson is a fashion model and dancer with NYCB Corps de Ballet since 2012. https://www.nycballet.com/discover/meet-our-dancers/corps-de-ballet/olivia-boisson/
Cameron Dieck, 2017, Economics, Summa Cum Laude, Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society	Dieck retired from NYCB Corps de Ballet. He is now an investment banker at Credit Suisse. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/25/style/unity-phelan-cameron-dieck-wedding.html
Megan Fairchild, 2017, Mathematics & Economics, Summa Cum Laude, Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society	Fairchild is a principal dancer in NYCB since 2001. She also starred in the 2014 Broadway revival of <i>On the Town</i> . https://medium.com/@ctapper1/megan-fairchild-a-life-of-ballet-cd7e6be04084
James Fayette, n.d., Economics	Fayette retired as a principal dancer of NYCB, while studying economics at Fordham. He now teaches at the Dance Conservatory of Charleston. https://www.colburnschool.edu/departments/tag/dance-academy-featured/
Linda H. Hamilton, 1984, Psychology, Summa Cum Laude, Psi Chi, Alpha Sigma Lambda, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Societies	Hamilton retired after 19 years in NYCB Corps de Ballet under Balanchine and Martins, while completing college and her PhD in clinical psychology. She became an author, therapist, columnist and pioneer in “performance psychology.” https://drlindahamilton.com/bio/ https://www.apa.org/monitor/dec03/barre.html
Ashly Isaacs, 2019, Economics, Summa Cum Laude. Omnicron Delta Epsilon and Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Societies	Isaacs danced with NYCB Corps de Ballet from 2009 to 2019. She went on to complete her Masters in Fine Arts (MFA) and a new career with Cal Arts in California as an experimental filmmaker and stop motion animator. https://www.linkedin.com/in/ashly-isaacs-35699389
Claire Kretzschmar, 2018, Communications & Media Studies, Summa Cum Laude	Kretzschmar retired as a soloist with NYCB. She went on to become Resident Choreographer of Ballet Hartford. https://pointemagazine.com/claire-kretzschmar-ballet-grandfather/ https://catholicartistconnection.com/blog/meet-ny-based-dancer-claire-kretzschmar
Lourdes Lopez, n.d., Media Studies	Lopez retired as a principal dancer of NYCB, after 9 years at Fordham (1988–1997). She is now the Artistic Director of the Miami City Ballet. https://uk.theory.com/be-heard-lourdes-lopez.html https://observer.com/2022/01/the-many-firsts-of-lourdes-lopez-artistic-director-of-miami-city-ballet/
Savannah Lowery, 2015, Mathematics & Economics, Cum Laude, Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society	Lowery retired as a soloist with NYCB. She later pursued a medical degree at Loyola Marymount University. https://www.tampabay.com/archive/2002/08/18/remarkable-reach/ https://www.dancemagazine.com/savannah-lowery-on-retiring-from-nycb-and-entering-the-medical-field/
Gwenyth Muller, 2015, English, Summa Cum Laude, Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society	Muller retired from NYCB Corps de Ballet. She went on to pursue two graduate degrees at Yale University School of Management (MBA, 2020) and Drama (MFA, 2020), for a career in consulting. https://linkedin.com/in/gwyneth-muller-719904103
Delia Peters, 1985, Middle East Studies, Summa Cum Laude, Alpha Sigma Honor Society, Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society	Peters danced for years in NYCB Corps de Ballet. She is now retired after years as a practicing litigation attorney in New York City. https://news.fordham.edu/arts-and-culture/ailey-fordham-bfa-benefit-returns/ https://www.nytimes.com/1982/08/08/arts/growing-older-in-the-corps-de-ballet.html
Unity Phelan, 2020, Economics & Organizational Leadership, Summa Cum Laude	Phelan is a film actress, model, and principal dancer in NYCB. https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/14/arts/dance/unity-phelan-new-york-city-ballet.html
Brittany Pollack, 2013, Communications & Media Studies, Summa Cum Laude, Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society	Pollack continues as a soloist at NYCB. She also starred in many films, including Steven Spielberg’s 2021 adaptation of <i>West Side Story</i> . https://www.nycballet.com/discover/meet-our-dancers/soloists/brittany-pollack/

Table 2, ending

NYCB dance student	Later second career achievements
Jennifer Ringer, 1998, English, Summa Cum Laude	Ringer retired from NYCB as a principal dancer. She is now a book author and Director of a California school for dance. https://news.fordham.edu/fordham-magazine/dancing-through-it/ https://fordhamram.com/2014/02/19/jenifer-ringers-farewell-performance/
Abigail Stafford Lillo, 2018, History, Cum Laude, Alpha Sigma Lambda Society	Lillo retired as a principal dancer in NYCB. She continued at Fordham for her law degree. https://fordhamobserver.com/15985/recent/arts-and-culture/abi-stafford-a-day-in-the-life-of-a-ballerina-collegian/
Jonathan Stafford, 2016, Organizational Leadership, Summa Cum Laude, Alpha Sigma Lambda Honor Society	Stafford retired as a NYCB principal dancer and Ballet Master. In 2019, he became the Artistic Director of NYCB and the School of American Ballet. https://news.fordham.edu/arts-and-culture/new-york-city-ballet-master-gets-extra-credit/

Note: this table notes their year of graduation, past role in NYCB, and later career path.

Discussion

Limitations. A major limitation of our findings is the small number of 28 completed surveys. Due to privacy issues, we had no contacts for most NYCB alumni from past decades, so this research is based on 28 NYCB surveys, which may not be representative of over 100 NYCB dancers who attended Fordham since 1968. NYCB has had 700 dancers since 1948, as NYCB marked its 75th anniversary in 2023.

Fordham-Ailey program. In 1998, after decades of success with NYCB dancers, FULC was inspired to partner with Alvin Ailey Dance Company to launch another bold new program for dancers: a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in dance. Like NYCB program, “beauty meets truth” as young dance students receive a Jesuit-based liberal arts education. But Unlike the NYCB partnership, several differences are clear. The Fordham-Ailey partnership has a cohort of Ailey dance students studying full-time during daytime hours in designated classes in their own dance facility adjacent to the Fordham campus. They earn a BFA in Dance (and possibly a second major) totaling 144 credits (rather than 124).

This new BFA program was co-founded by Fordham Dean Edward J. Bristow and Ailey Dance School Director Denise Jefferson (Hamilton et al., 2002). As of 2008, after 10 years, the Ailey program was thriving, as a total of 350 applicants were auditioned, 35 of these were accepted into Fordham/Ailey, and 20 entered the cohort. Later, an estimated “65 percent of graduates have paying jobs as dancers, either in companies or on Broadway, within a year of graduation. Some graduates go on to dance professionally with both the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater and Ailey II”.⁸ As of 2023, the Fordham/Ailey BFA program numbers over 25–30 students per year, and has produced over 300 graduates since 1998. Like NYCB alumni, the Ailey alumni have a liberal arts education to serve them well for a second career that awaits them.

⁸ Gosier, C. (2008, November 24). Ten years later, Ailey/Fordham BFA program is thriving. *Fordham Now*. Retrieved July 14, 2023, from <https://news.fordham.edu/inside-fordham/ten-years-later-ailexfordham-bfa-program-is-thriving/>

Conclusion

How can a university best help elite dancers to prepare for a second career? We can see two conclusions here.

First, since 1948, many of the world's elite performers have been among the 700 dancers who have thrilled audiences on the stage of NYCB for 75 years. In 1968, “truth joined beauty” when Fordham University became part of the Lincoln Center campus, and over 100 of these 700 NYCB dancers were able to broaden their ken with a liberal arts degree. From available evidence, it seems Fordham successfully adapted its programs to match dancers' needs. Since 1998, dance students in the Fordham/Ailey BFA program can now earn their college degree earlier in their dance career. In both cases – with NYCB and Ailey – the outcome has been mutually beneficial: dancers have enriched the life of their university, while creating second-career options with their own college education.

Second, can this Fordham NYCB program be a model for other nations? As of 2024, a total of 512 cities top the one-million mark across the globe. Most of these cities are proud of their regional or national ballet company (Wulff, 2020), where elite dancers are also seeking ways to prepare for a second career. Urban universities may well design Fordham-type programs in three steps: (a) assess the needs of local elite dancers; (b) design a program that meets these needs for scheduling and other accommodations; (c) use 360-degree surveys (Voitko, Takooshian) to monitor the dancers' progress towards their degree and second career.

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Lillian Zeller – biographical research on dancers, qualitative data, interviews, text writing and editing. *Harold Takooshian* – historical research on Fordham University, quantitative data, text writing and editing.

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The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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APPENDIX

Student survey

Fordham survey

Please take a moment to give us your frank views about Fordham. Circle each item below, either: (A) Agree strongly, (a) agree, (?) have no opinion, (d) disagree, (D) Disagree strongly. This survey is anonymous. THANK YOU! **



Overall, I am satisfied with the Fordham:

1. A a ? d D cafeteria.
2. A a ? d D library.
3. A a ? d D student services (bursar, registrar, financial aid...).
4. A a ? d D campus security staff.
5. A a ? d D computer facilities.

Most of my professors at Fordham:

6. A a ? d D are interested in their students' education.
7. A a ? d D present course material in a stimulating way.
8. A a ? d D are expert in their subject.
9. A a ? d D have high morale.
10. A a ? d D are available to students outside the classroom.

About Fordham students:

11. A a ? d D They are hard-working.
12. A a ? d D I like the diversity among them.
13. A a ? d D There is a sense of "college life" among students on campus.

14. A a ? d D They are friendly.
15. A a ? d D They are well-prepared for college work.
16. A a ? d D The student organizations add much to activities on campus.
17. A a ? d D Academically, Fordham is comparable to an Ivy League school.
18. A a ? d D Deans seem available and helpful to students.
19. A a ? d D The location of this campus is very good.
20. A a ? d D Fordham tuition and fees are reasonable next to other schools.

Now please describe yourself:

21. Age: under 20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+
22. Gender: Male Female.
23. Employed during school year: No. Yes, part-time. Yes, full-time.
24. I attend Fordham: Part-time. Full-time.
25. My school is (circle:) (undergraduate) FCRH FCLC PCS CBA
(post-graduate) LAW GBA GED GSS GRRE GSAS
26. The number of years have I studied at Fordham = ____ years.
27. (Optional:) My religion: _____.
28. I live in Fordham dorms: No. at LC. at RH.
If so, I have lived ____ years in its dorms.
29. I am an international student: No. Yes, nation: _____
30. I am a veteran studying on the current G.I. Bill: No Yes
If a veteran: I'd say Fordham is a "veteran friendly" school (circle one):
Not at all 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 very much
31. Campus? I study primarily at:
 LC-Manhattan RH-Bronx FW-Westchester
32. Time? I now study primarily in the: Day Evening
33. (Optional:) The thing I *like* most about Fordham is: [more space on back]
34. (Optional:) The thing I *dislike* most about Fordham is: [more space on back]
35. (Optional:) I offer this suggestion to improve Fordham: [space on back]
36. (Optional:) Any other comments on Fordham or this survey. [space on back]

** For any questions on this survey, or a free summary of the findings, contact Prof. Harold Takooshian at 212-636-6393 or takoosh@aol.com. For any general comments, contact irb@fordham.edu.

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
IRB APPROVAL

This study expires on:	No Expiration Date
<i>Harold Takooshian</i>	

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Краткое сообщение

Там, где красота встречается с истиной: танцоры балета в Университете Фордхем

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Аннотация. С момента создания в 1968 г. одной из уникальных задач нового кампуса Фордхемского университета в Линкольн-центре исполнительских искусств было обучение артистов-исполнителей, в том числе танцоров балета. Исследование посвящено опыту

и впечатлениям, получаемым танцорами в Фордхэме. Рассмотрена краткая история «брака красоты с истиной» в Линкольн-центре. Проанализированы способы удовлетворения уникальных образовательных потребностей танцоров. Осуществлена количественная оценка с использованием 80-балльного опроса удовлетворенности студентов, показавшая, что 28 танцоров Нью-Йоркского городского балета (NYCB) набрали значительно более высокие баллы (среднее значение 58,5), чем 1365 других студентов кампуса Фордхемского университета в Линкольн-центре (среднее значение 53,2; *t*-критерий; *p* < 0,001). Качественная оценка выявила различные пути, выбранные 20 известными танцорами NYCB для применения полученного в Фордхэме образования ко второй карьере в широком спектре специальностей: от танцев и искусства до менеджмента, образования, права, психологии и медицины.

Ключевые слова: танцоры, Университет Фордхэм, Нью-Йоркский городской балет, городское образование, обратная связь «360 градусов», аттитюды студентов

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