

Elyssa Fonicello

Project Overview Narrative

Project Title: Developing Leaders through Dance

Project Description:

Dance has been integral in the development of my own leadership and creative thinking skills. I have consistently found ways to apply these skills to my benefit in other work or academic endeavors. I believe that dance can play an important role in a community by teaching young students to be confident leaders and challenge them to think creatively to solve issues. Through an Arts Award Project, I would like to combine my interests in dance, leadership, and enacting policy by researching the potential intersection of these different academic areas. Next year I will begin to study in the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy while continuing to pursue a minor in Dance. Exploring the connection between dance and leadership will provide me with an opportunity to combine my academic interests into one research project. I hope to determine how dance can effectively cultivate leadership in students and to learn the best methods for teaching leadership skills through dance. In conjunction, I am eager like to explore how dance can contribute to a community by helping to develop young, confident leaders.

With funds from an Arts Award, I would like to attend the Now & Next Dance Mentoring Workshop for college students from August 17-21. Now Next Dance is a non-profit based in Washington, DC that endeavors to teach creativity and leadership through contemporary dance. Their week-long summer program for college dancers provides many unique opportunities to develop skills as a performer, choreographer, and dance leader/educator. Each day of the program I will participate in a company-style class to strengthen technique and learn new repertory, followed by mentoring lunches and activities with middle school-aged dance students. I will then teach a modern dance class based on the Now Next Dance style to the middle school dance students. In addition, I will have the opportunity to network with dance professionals and to collaborate with my peers in the creation of choreographic works that will be presented at the culmination of the week.

I am eager to attend the Now & Next Dance Mentoring Workshop to learn more about myself as a dancer and to develop my capacity to lead through dance. Attending this program will provide me with an initial basis of understanding from which I will be able to continue my research into the connection between dance and leadership. I plan to document my experiences at the workshop by keeping a journal for notes and reflection. If possible, I would also like to document the workshop by taking pictures and videos. This documentation will prove useful for the completion of my project and provide me with tangible material to present and work with.

Upon completing the workshop, I will return to UVa and create a choreographic work exploring the idea of leadership through movement for the Dance Minor Program's Fall Dance Concert. This will be an excellent opportunity for me to apply the knowledge and skills I will gain from attending the Now & Next Workshop. At the Spring Outcomes Award Presentation, I will present a video of my choreography in conjunction with the documentation of my experience at the Now & Next Workshop.

The 3rd Year Arts Award will enable me to combine my studies of public policy, leadership, and dance into one project. It is my hope that through the Now & Next Dance Mentoring Workshop, I will be able to learn more about how dance can help develop effective leaders and then apply this knowledge when creating a piece of choreographic work in the Fall Semester. I am eager to challenge myself to grow both as a dancer and a leader through the completion of this project.

Timeline:

August 17-21:

- Attend the Now & Next Dance Mentoring Workshop in Washington, DC
- Document my experience through journaling and photography

Fall 2015 Semester:

- Create a choreographic work exploring the idea of leadership for the Dance Program’s Fall Dance Concert.
- Continue to research the connection between dance and leadership.

Spring 2016 Semester:

- Continue to research
- Apply for Fourth Year Arts Award Application- Possible continuation of Third Year Project
- Present documentation of workshop, research, and choreographic work at Outcomes Award Presentation.

Budget:

Now & Next Dance Mentoring Workshop	\$350
Housing Expenses	\$500-\$600
Train from Charlottesville to DC and back	\$50
Total	\$1000

I plan on covering additional expenses, such as food, with my own money.