

Faculty Mentor Statement for Olivia McCarty
Application for 2021 College of Creative Arts Faculty/Student Mentored Research Award

Olivia had first approached me with interest in working on something beneficial to the dance program. I instantly thought of a neglected pile of old dance concert posters and programs, in the corner of the dressing room at E. Moore Hall, as well as the posters in the hallway outside the dance studio. I suggested that she digitize these items to put into archival folders and also create Excel sheets with names and contact info of alumni of *Orchesis*, the student dance company, as well as the Jazz Dance Ensemble and Ballet Ensemble.

As Olivia was becoming more passionate about the history of dance at WVU during this project, and more interested in the world of archiving, I drew her into the bigger picture of working to deepen and advance her knowledge of archival organization and data collection. I attended a National Dance Education Organization workshop on archiving dance materials and shared that information with her. In the effort to establish a strong dance alumni base, I suggested to Olivia that she begin to connect with alumni on the list as well continue to look for alumni on social media platforms, which she has done successfully.

I mentored Olivia in reaching out to additional research personnel here at WVU in order to help uncover more archival materials (photos, videos, posters, yearbooks) during this past year. Such contacts are Beth Royall (Creative Arts Librarian), which led us to Michael Ridderbusch (Associate Curator for Archives and Manuscripts) and Jessica Eichlin (Reference Supervisor) at WVU Libraries West Virginia and Regional History Center. Additionally, Kacy Wiedebusch (former director of dance) and her daughter Carole (dance alumni student and former faculty member) have offered to help Olivia identify remaining alumni in the materials once it is safe to do so, following COVID-19 restrictions.

Olivia had the idea to bring younger classmen into the project so that it can continue after she graduates this May. I guided Olivia in identifying strong candidates and we shared ideas on how best to set them and the project up for future success.

Olivia and I met often throughout this past year to discuss the most productive ways for organizing, planning and taking next steps throughout the different stages of the project. I encouraged her to carry out various steps in creating the strong alumni base and I supported her as she took agency in her own visions and hopes for the project.

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