**Dancers' Symposium Constitution**

Last Updated January 14th, 2015

Dancers’ Symposium (DS) was founded in 1990 to provide an opportunity for undergraduate through Ph.D to choreograph and perform original dance pieces for their peers, faculty, and family. It offers instruction in various dance styles from around the world and is an excellent showcase for the diverse talents of the Carnegie Mellon community. Dancers’ Symposium is recognized and funded by the Student Senate.

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**1. Mission Statement**

Dancers' Symposium provides an open and supportive environment to further the exposure of dance, music, student choreography, and student performance at Carnegie Mellon University. There are no requirements to audition; people of all backgrounds, cultures, majors, and genders are encouraged to participate. Diverse styles of choreography and lyrical content are encouraged. One two-act show is produced each semester, consisting of staging, lighting, and student costume design. All performances are open to the public. Furthermore, Dancers’ Symposium seeks to be an active member of the university community by offering open dance classes taught by organization members and by working with local dance companies to bring additional classes and performances to campus. Dancers’ Symposium is composed of Dancers, Choreographers, Directors, and the dance community.

**2. Dancers**

***2.1 Rights:***

Any individual directly affiliated with Carnegie Mellon who has paid their Student Activities fee is welcome to audition regardless of background or dance style preference. In some cases, members of the University of Pittsburgh or other local communities may participate as well as long as they pay a semester worth of Student Activities fee to the HUB (to gain privileges such as using UC space through a student organization funded by the Student Senate). Experience is not necessary. All Dancers have the right to a fair audition process. Once put in a dance, all the Dancers have a right and a responsibility to learn choreography and perform it on stage at the show. All Dancers have the right to fair treatment; in the case of any problem with fellow Dancers and/or the Choreographer(s), the Dancer should speak to the Choreographer. If this does not resolve the issue, the Dancer should turn to the Directors for guidance. All cases will be examined individually and thoroughly, and the Directors will make and notify dancers of the final decisions. Dancers have a right to know all of the major production dates for the semester, including but not limited to auditions, checkpoint, tech week, and shows.

***2.2 Responsibilities:***

All Dancers must be present the day of auditions (unless they have participated in the Make Up Auditions or contacted the Directors prior to the auditions and received permission due to special circumstances; they will then be placed on the unassigned dancers list). They should arrive promptly and make sure to properly warm up. They will preview a short portion of each dance piece. The Directors will teach all Dancers an audition piece choreographed by the Directors, which will include a variety of styles, allowing each Dancer to showcase their performance abilities.

All auditions will be videotaped. Dancers will be responsible for ranking the dances in order of their preference and then entering their exact preferences and information into the computer documents provided.

If accepted into any dance, the Dancer is required to dedicate a minimum of 1 hour per week per dance to learning choreography. A Dancer can be in a maximum of 3 dances per semester (although this number may be adjusted on a semester-by-semester basis at the discretion of the Directors – exceptions included and are not limited to: senior solos, participation in outside organization pieces, and choreographing multiple pieces). The total number of dances that anyone can participate in is an absolute maximum of 5 dances per semester. Dancers must attend all rehearsals, unless the Choreographer(s) are notified previously of an unavoidable conflict. They will also be required to participate in Checkpoint, ticket sales, tech rehearsals, dress rehearsal and the show.

Being a Dancer is a privilege and if a Dancer agrees to be in a dance, he/she is making a commitment to his/her fellow Dancers, Choreographers, and the Dancers’ Symposium organization. If a Dancer does not follow the guidelines outlined in this Constitution, or chooses to drop out from their dance at some point in the semester, they will be placed on a one-semester probation known as the “Blacklist”, during which time the Dancer will not be allowed to participate in the show. However, the Dancer will be allowed to stay in other pieces in order to prevent unfair consequences for other Choreographers. Should the Dancer have an extenuating medical or personal circumstance that prevents them from dancing, they will not be Blacklisted. All Dancer drop cases will be reviewed by the Directing staff and the decisions will be notified to Dancer(s) and Choreographer(s) in person and/or in e-mail.

**3. Choreographers**

All Dancers who have participated in Dancers’ Symposium for at least 1 semester are eligible to choreograph, pending a choreographer audition. They are not required to have any prior experience if they are co-choreographing with another dancer who has that experience. Each Choreographer may choreograph 1 piece alone each semester, but may choreograph an additional piece with a co-Choreographer. In other words, an individual may not be involved in choreographing more than 2 pieces (this number excludes outside organization participation, senior solo, etc.). Choreographers are required to attend Choreographer auditions and demonstrate a small segment of their dance in front of the Directing staff. They will be notified by the Directing staff if their dance has been selected for the show. Choreographers must attend the Choreographer technical meeting held mid-semester. Choreographers have a right to know all of the major production dates for the semester, including but not limited to auditions, checkpoint, tech week, and shows.

***3.1 Rights:***

Choreographers have the right to request any Dancer who auditions for their piece. They may choose as many Dancers as they desire, within the constraints of the performance venue. If a Choreographer does not get the number of Dancers they wished, then he/she may ONLY request people from the unassigned dancers list. However after Checkpoint, Choreographers will be allowed to pull in anyone within DS meeting the maximum dance requirement OR anyone with past DS experience. This exception is allowed due to the time constraint and to maintain the quality of the show. Violation of these rules will result in one-semester probation for the Choreographer(s) and Dancer(s) involved. Choreographers will be provided with one hour of rehearsal time per week, which will be allocated space by the Directors based on size of dance and availability of choreographer and dancers involved. Directors will try to accommodate dances with special circumstances (large number of Dancers, tap, etc.) but the organization is subject to the limitations and availabilities of campus dancing facilities.

Choreographers have the right to a specified amount of money per Dancer in order to provide costuming. Choreographers will submit a costume budget plan to the Directors as specified by the Directors. The current budget is $10 per Dancer. Choreographers have the option of renting items from the costume closet. They may rent any large props or costume pieces in the closet for a fee determined by the directing staff, and small props and accessories for a lower fee determined by the directing staff. Choreographers are financially responsible for items not returned after the performance. Choreographers may purchase costume items on their own and may be reimbursed for the predetermined amount once a receipt and reimbursement form have been provided. Purchase of reusable costumes are encouraged, and purchase of personalized costumes are discouraged. Another option is to forward purchase requests to a Director to be put on the DS Tartan Card. Choreographers also have the right to design their lighting, subject to AB Tech constraints. Choreographers are eligible to receive one free regular admission ticket, not VIP (required to pay the difference), if they meet the predetermined expectations given by the directors. These expectations may include submitting show materials (program info, lighting sheets) in a timely manner.

***3.2 Responsibilities:***

Each dance must have a minimum of 4 Dancers not including the Choreographer (the only exceptions are senior solos, duets/ensembles which must be approved by directors (and auditioned at Checkpoint). Choreographers are responsible for showing a portion of their dance at the choreographer and main stage auditions.

They must fill out the Choreographer sheet with the details of their dance and later fill out a Choreographer Preference Sheet to record the information of Dancers in which they may be interested (choosing only from those who auditioned for their dance according to the form filled out by the Dancers). Once allocated, they must contact all their Dancers and request their schedules in order to best choose a practice time.

Choreographers are responsible for choreographing and teaching their own pieces. They must conduct weekly rehearsals, at which they must come prepared to teach or review material. A Choreographer is responsible for using their allocated space. They should NEVER have their required weekly rehearsal at any space or time on campus that has not been pre-approved by the Directors. They may hold extra rehearsals in alternate spaces, but must specify that attendance is not required. If a Choreographer plans on canceling a rehearsal, they must contact the Directors and their Dancers 24 hours in advance. Directors will circulate throughout the semester to ensure that allocated dance spaces are being used.

Checkpoint will be held approximately mid-way into the semester. A Choreographer is responsible for having at least 1/2 of the dance taught and in presentable condition (depending on checkpoint date, this may change to a minimum of 2/3 of a dance.) They will be assigned a time for Checkpoint and will inform their Dancers of when and where they must attend. A dance cannot be performed at the show unless performed at Checkpoint and approved by the Directors. In order to maintain a high quality show and the reputable Dancers’ Symposium name, Directors maintain the right and responsibility of assuring that all dances meet certain performance expectations. If there are any dances “cut” from the show due to number of dancers or quality of the dance, a Director will notify the Choreographer(s) and Dancers in person and/or in e-mail. They will be encouraged to participate in the following semester.

Choreographers are responsible for submitting a final edited version of their music, program info, Lighting Sheet, and Costume Budget Plan due by Checkpoint (please see Choreographer Information PDF for pertinent dates per semester). If music, program, lighting, and costume info is not submitted on time, choreographer is not given a free ticket. Program information includes song title, dance name, Choreographer names, and any additional comments. Details will be provided via e-mail when deadlines approach.

Choreographers must have their dance finished and taught by the week before the show. They must inform their Dancers of the tech rehearsals and dress rehearsal and ensure that everybody is present at both. All costuming should be worn at tech and dress rehearsal; makeup is optional. Choreographers are responsible for making sure that all their choreography, costuming, makeup, and props are in order for the show. After the show it is the Choreographer’s responsibility to ensure that all their Dancers have submitted the costuming and/or props that belong to Dancers’ Symposium; Choreographers will be financially responsible for anything not returned. They must also make sure that their reimbursement forms are accurately filled out, signed by a Director, and submitted.

Choreographers may not take it upon themselves to cut people from their dance. If a Dancer is repeatedly absent or problematic, the Choreographer should discuss these issues with the Dancer. The Choreographer may request a dancer to be cut if he or she has three unexcused absences. If the problem is not resolved, then the Choreographer should make an appointment with their assigned Director Buddy in order to discuss their options. All cases will be examined individually and thoroughly, and the Directors will make and notify dancers of the final decisions.

Being a Choreographer is a privilege and a huge responsibility. It is important for Choreographers to understand that when taking on this job, they make a commitment not only to the Dancers but to the organization as a whole. If a Choreographer does not follow the guidelines outlined in this constitution, or chooses to drop their dance at some point in the semester, they will be placed on a one-semester probation during which they will not be allowed to participate. All choreographers involved in probation will be notified in person and/or in e-mail by a Director.

**4. Directors**

There are 4-6 Directors per school year.

***4.1 Responsibilities:***

• Fund allocation (for lighting, costuming, facility rental, etc.)

• Allocating Dancers into their preferred dances while following the Choreographers’ selections

• Scheduling of space for rehearsals and meetings

• Organizing an efficient and fair audition process

• Staying in close contact with assigned Choreographer buddies and overseeing the creation of their dance

• Staying in close contact with Administration, including the Music and Athletic Departments (for facility use) and the University Center Staff

• Enforcement of all Dancers’ Symposium policies applicable to Choreographers and Dancers

• Organization of all DS-sponsored events (guest instructors, fundraisers, etc.)

• Selection of new Directors

• Designing and producing each performance

• T-shirts and Video production

Every Director is assigned several Choreographer Buddies. The Director serves as a point of contact between the staff and each choreographer and should be able to report back every two weeks as to the progress of their Choreographer Buddies’ dances. This strengthens communication within the organization and allows for each choreographer to receive the assistance and support they individually require.

Directors are required to meet regularly with the current DS advisor to keep him or her informed and up-to-date about the organization's status and events. At these meetings and all other non-standard\* DS-related meetings, the following is required:

• Every effort should be made for all Directors to be present

• A minimum of 2 Directors must attend

• All Directors must discuss and agree upon the agenda before the meeting

• Minutes of the meeting must be emailed out afterwards to all Directors

Directors are encouraged to choreograph and perform, and they are subject to the same rules as other Choreographers and Dancers. Directors may not influence the selection of Dancers for any piece except for those they choreograph themselves. Directors may serve in this capacity until they graduate or wish to pass their responsibilities to a new Director. If a situation presents itself where the Directors disagree on a matter, they should seek advice from the organization advisor.

Being a Director is an important responsibility; if a Director does not live up to his or her commitment, or displays behavior that could damage the Dancers’ Symposium name, the other Directors should seek guidance from the advisor. A Director removal occurs when all other Directors and the advisor agree that the removal of this Director will benefit the organization.

Any situations involving conflict of interest, or special circumstances that are not covered by the current Constitution will be carefully and thoroughly examined by the Directors. The Directing Staff has the final decision-making authority in any matter within the organization. All decisions will be notified to the individuals involved. Any decisions involving uncommon consequences will be notified to the Advisor. Any situations involving financial or legal consequences will be discussed with the Advisor prior to making decisions.

***4.2 Director selection***:

New Directors are chosen to replace those who are graduating and/or relinquishing their responsibilities. DS members will make nominations at the end of each semester, as needed, for individual Dancers’ Symposium members to join the directing staff. Nominees may be chosen from among Dancers who have performed with DS for 2 semesters, and nominations must be accompanied by a brief explanation of why they would make a good Director. Directors may seek opinions from those Choreographers who have had the nominee in their dance, or from the nominee’s fellow Dancers. The Directors must unanimously approve a nominee before s/he may join the directing team the following semester.

Director applicants’ plans for studying abroad should be seriously considered when choosing a new director.  Having a director leave for a semester of a year without a replacement significantly impacts the organization. In such cases where a director does choose to study abroad, the directing staff must meet and vote unanimously on whether to replace the director permanently, or operate understaffed for that given period of time. Directors voted off the staff due to studying abroad may reapply to the directing staff if there is an opening in the future.

Privileges: each Director is given 1 T-shirt and is invited to the Directors’ dinner. They are also given the option of reserving 4 seats at the show.

The inability of Dancers, Choreographers, or Directors to follow the rules & guidelines stated above could result in any of the following consequences:

• Being cut from a dance

• Being cut from a show

• Being put on probation from participating in the organization for up to 1 year

**5. Community**

Dancers’ Symposium is committed to giving back to the Pittsburgh community not only through performance, but also through teaching. Members of Dancers’ Symposium may volunteer to teach on-campus workshops and open classes, participate in on-campus workshops hosted by local dance companies, volunteer to assist in teaching a dance class to daycare children on campus, or participate in any other events Directors are notified of for the Dancers' Symposium community.

**6. Policy Papers**

In order to keep the Constitution clean and clear, Policy Papers are created as addenda to our regulations. These are not optional, but rather they supplement the content in the main body of the Constitution.

The following is a current listing of all Policy Papers:

• Auditions

•Dancer Placement and Unassigned List

•Music and Choreography Restrictions

•Checkpoint

•Outside Orgs

•Senior Solo

•Show order

•Costume Closet

•Tech and Dress

•Open Classes

•Infra Dance Company

•Soulstylz

[omitted Dance Marathon Spring 2014]