

Success as an artist is reliant not only on an astute understanding of one's artistic discipline, but cultivating problem solving dexterity, multiple ways of thinking, self-responsibility, community, and empathy. Because contemporary leaders in postsecondary education need the abilities to ask informed questions, pose imaginative solutions, and implement strategies that are inclusive of multiple modes of thinking and being, creativity is a central component of effective leadership in postsecondary education. As such, the arts are primed to be the educational nucleus for developing and implementing models and values for creative leadership and stewardship within postsecondary education.

In my work as a hybrid artist/educator/scholar, I have cultivated a practice that is reflective, investigative, and centered in creative and physical practices of dance. I have long been motivated to examine my own work, to experiment with new approaches, and to share what I have found as a way to ignite larger dialogues about the role of dance in higher education. This work is driven by both by a desire to learn more about and improve my own teaching effectiveness and to proactively consider dance education's ongoing evolution within university and college programs. Through publishing and reflecting upon this work, I have come to find that I value creativity, equity, embodiment, reflection, and democracy as central to my all my work inside and outside of dance.

As a leader in the performing arts in postsecondary education, these values guide my work in the areas of shared governance, curricular development, faculty advisement, and advocating for the performing arts within the university. These values manifest as I situate my work as creative leadership, a term that recognizes the coupled nature of innovation and initiative needed implement change in today's world. I strive to call upon the characteristics of imagination, contextualized line of inquiry formulation, and flexible thinking in all aspects of my work and to cultivate and respect these characteristics in others. In my work as an artist, educator, and emerging leader, I have learned to trust my intuition and empathy for others, reconcile divergent perspectives, and to preserve. These skills permit me to act as a both an initiator and steward of ideas, to be deliberately collaborative, and to be proactively inclusive. My desire to dexterously visualize and enact uncommon solutions to emergent challenges stems from my capacity to use the full range of human intelligences when interacting with the world; aptitudes developed through my artistic practice.

My strengths as a leader stem from my work as an artist/educator/scholar. I transfer the skills I call upon and have cultivated through my artistic, educational, and research practices when assuming leadership roles. In this way, I am able to lead from a value-centered framework.

- I am a proactive and creative yet strategic thinker. Because I can simultaneously see the "whole picture" and the "details," I am able to set a large goal and break it down into smaller, more implementable parts. I am also able to spot and address small problems or things that need improvement before they escalate into larger issues. This aptitude stems from pedagogical approach to creating student-centered learning tasks that scaffold over time to create comprehensive learning experiences.
- I am a critical and reflective thinker. My ability to hold and consider two (or more) seemingly divergent ideas in my mind allows me to consider multiple courses of action and solutions. Similar to how I generate or gather, evaluate, combine, discard, and reconfigure ideas when choreographing a dance, my approach to leadership often involves generating multiple options stemming from multiple viewpoints before determining a course of action.

- I “listen to learn” and look for common ground when approaching with an issue. Just as collaboration within dance and among artists requires finding commonalities, knowing when to yield, and when to assert, my approach to leadership is based on developing sensitivity to creating and embodying shared goals and values for a department.
- My work as an artist and educator is dependent on my abilities to both lead and collaborate. I see these as interconnected. In a leadership role, I tend to think of myself as leading from the middle; I view myself as part of the team, am open to ideas I may not have considered, and am able to keep a team moving towards a common goal (even if that goal evolves as part of the collaboration).
- My work as a performer, choreographer, and researcher developed a keen ability to objectively hear and apply criticism and feedback. My work as an educator requires me to offer objective criticism and feedback. In my role as a leader, I find that I am able to maintain a sense of objectivity and respect, which allows me to lead in a transparent way.
- Finally, my hunger to learn more and to fully understand the multiple perspectives of a topic or situation allows me to ask and hold a question. Often, knowing the question to ask is more important than finding an answer. Just as my work in dance education research requires me to understand the relevance of a question to determine the best approach to examining the question, as a leader, I need to know what question to ask, when to ask it, and how to build a paradigm for finding a solution.

My success as a leader in postsecondary education is dependent on a willingness to remain open to learning more about the performing arts and myself, and an admission that I will not always have the needed answers. It is my responsibility to stay abreast of best practices within educational leadership and to ask “for whom?”; to remain vigilant against complacency; and to advocate for the centrality of the performing arts as a means of knowledge generation and knowledge translation within contemporary postsecondary education. I look towards each leadership opportunity to investigate and promote the values of the performing arts in postsecondary education.