Our 50th birthday provided a moment to celebrate and reflect upon how we have embraced and challenged change at Dance at Illinois (DAI). The year 2019 brought an abundance of collaborative projects and pedagogical approaches that are co-created, but a former student, Momar Ndiaye, reminds us, “It is always a hard look at power, privilege, racism, and bias, which tend to bind us to hierarchical patterns and systems. In order to disrupt these patterns, choreographer and MacArthur genius awardee, Liz Lerman, has intentionally built a more diverse community, but now we are looking back/moving forward – looking back at what embodied inclusivity might look like.”

Collaboration, the heart of the creative process, disrupts this hierarchical dynamic. As we move forward into the next 50 years, we will revisit our traditional partnerships with the School of Music and the Department of English, and review the undergraduate curriculum in order to further the ways in which we relocate the modern dance canon and thankfully add to the wealth of our earthly achievements and archives. This is not to suggest that the core of our mission is to continue to innovate, but it is to reflect – in our ability to hold space trans-laterally in these most turbulent times! And so I thank you all for the continued sociopolitical, intellectual, and personal ethics here at Dance at Illinois.

As we move forward into the next 50 years, we will continue to focus our attention toward fully dancing together. Diversity and inclusivity are not mere words, rather, mental, physical, and spiritual tools that we are continuously utilizing in our everyday practice. 

Dancing 50 – looking back/moving forward...
dancing 50—the mash-up projects

Twenty-three alums returned to participate in these projects, performing solo, duets, trios, and larger group movements. Each alumnus was paired with two current students, resulting in a creative collision of worlds for our students who were performing in February Dance, Alexander Dance, and School of Music. Special thanks to Richard Erickson whose gift made the Mash-Up Projects a reality and the many generous donors who matched his gift!

Each visit was equal parts exhausting and inspiring. The students were excited to work with new faculty and open their eyes to how much of a gift it was to be a student here. I found the energy at Dance to be very invigorating as I engaged my students with their peers and alumni. I was grateful that Dance at Illinois is doing work that is often subverted around cultural acceptance and celebration.

I was humbled by the energy of special guests I introduced the students to at our Mash-up Projects, and then their energy was one of support, collaboration, and sharing. To see new faces, especially so many new brown faces, make Dance at Illinois feel more like home than I had ever seen. Students are New Faces, and in these projects, they are joined by new faculty and staff. I fell in awe with her then, and my love for her artistry, mentorship, and abilities to tackle the movement with aplomb, open-mindedness, and curiosity. The time I spent in the studio with Linda was like taking a mini vacation. To collaborate, bounce ideas off of one another, and dig deep into our shared influences felt like such a luxury, and ultimately, the highlight of my year. I was deeply impressed with the students' deep into our shared influences felt like such a luxury, and ultimately, the highlight of my year. I was deeply impressed with the students' abilities to tackle the movement with aplomb, open-mindedness, and curiosity. The time I spent in the studio with Linda was like taking a mini vacation. To collaborate, bounce ideas off of one another, and dig deep into our shared influences felt like such a luxury, and ultimately, the highlight of my year. I was deeply impressed with the students' abilities to tackle the movement with aplomb, open-mindedness, and curiosity.

The Promise and Charlie Maybee (MFA '19) in Charlie of Stormy Weather

I was so much fun, and their daily rigor reminded me how much I loved being a student here. I carried this energy back to New York, invigorating my creative practice with their sense of dogged curiosity.

Each visit was equal parts exhausting and inspiring. The students were excited to work with new faculty and open their eyes to how much of a gift it was to be a student here. I found the energy at Dance to be very invigorating as I engaged my students with their peers and alumni. I was grateful that Dance at Illinois is doing work that is often subverted around cultural acceptance and celebration. I was humbled by the energy of special guests I introduced the students to at our Mash-up Projects, and then their energy was one of support, collaboration, and sharing. To see New Faces, especially so many new brown faces, make Dance at Illinois feel more like home than I had ever seen. Students are New Faces, and in these projects, they are joined by new faculty and staff. I fell in awe with her then, and my love for her artistry, mentorship, and abilities to tackle the movement with aplomb, open-mindedness, and curiosity.
A performance of *Long Run* by Bessie Award-winning Tere O’Connor in the Krannert Center’s marquee series is a welcome event this fall. It is not surprising to see the great cultural esteem that this Chicago-based dance company has garnered. It has achieved notoriety in its leadership by the singular vision and exacting articulations of the choreographic arts. From stark abstraction to warmly emotional reimaginings of the human experience, Tere O’Connor’s work has been an important voice advocating for young dance artists and their unique interpretations to shape the work. Dancer, offering their own voices and the general sustainability of the form into the future. His work has allowed him entry into the great institutions of dance for over 30 years. Through his performances, teaching, mentoring, and writing, he has become an important voice advocating for young dance artists and the top dancers from around the globe (including DAI alums and faculty) have performed in Tere O’Connor’s works.

The Choreographic Platform aspires to create new theoretical constructs regarding the arts, practices. Dramaturg Betsy Brandt (MFA ‘12), writers Aumaine Gruich and Emmilea O’Toole, and professionals) exploring processes of making new dances, music, poems, and films. The first annual Choreographic Platform was launched in summer 2019 led by Professor Sara Hook and DAI alums Amber Sloan (BFA ’01) and Nic Petry (MFA ’05). The group along with 20 invited dancers and choreographers from across this region and beyond dove deeply into an investigation of innovative collaborative possibilities. The Promise of Stormy Weather

Elliot Emadian (MFA ’20) and Isiah Asplund (BFA ’20) in Charlie Maybee’s *Tecza and Kato Lindholm*. Set to two tangos by Piazzolla, the piece challenged traditional notions of gender roles in a hybrid of tango and contemporary dance, performed with the two champion competitive ballroom dance couples, Alex Tecza and Kato Lindholm. It was a magical performance that people are still talking about. Photo: Alex Tecza and Kato Lindholm in Professor Rebecca Nettl-Fiol and guest artists

**Choreographic Platform**

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dance at illinois

"Armageddon or Sunrise or Something" choreographed and performed by Mauriah Donegan Kraker (MFA ’19) and Leah Wilks (MFA ’19) Elizabeth Koenig (BS ’19), Elyana London (BFA ’22), Mary Kate Ford (BFA ’20), Erin Harvey (BA ’20), Jenny Oelerich (BFA ’19), and Jessica Ziegler (BFA ’21) in Jenny Oelerich’s ‘By Means of Cacophony’

Jaylen Clay (MFA ’21), Jeremy Taylor (BFA ’20), William Ervin (MFA ’20), Eddie Shellman (BA ’19), and Danzel Thompson-Stout (MFA ’21) in Professor C. Kemal Nance’s ‘I Wonder...’

dance at illinois
First graduated class of new yoga certification program

BY MARY KATE FORD

Six of our undergraduate dance majors completed the two-year program and are officially certified yoga teachers. Alum Maria Koleva-Schneider handles the training program. This teacher training pairing beautifully with the already-established curriculum for dance majors, and thanks to Linda Lehovec, our fearless yoga leader, we are able to offer a way of completing this certification which typically would be done through a private studio. This program gives students a chance to study all limbs deeply, and not being able to teach until they did a certification program. The program general practices yoga as a tool for body movement, and yoga practice as a way to build a community where everyone is precious, and present means for an interdisciplinary group of dance students.

Vicki A. Skirnisdottir Memorial Scholarship (est. 1994) in recognition of outstanding performance

Elisabeth Groves (BFA '20)

Denzel Thompson-Stout (BFA '21)

Mike Family Dance Award (est. 1994) for unique contributions to the program

Charlie Mays (BFA '19)

Wendy M. Hartwig Prize for Student Choreography (est. 2000)

Miriam Krader (BFA '19)

Lesa Wilks (MA '19)

Paving Student Graduate Travel Award (est. 2010)

Rachel Gizzi (BFA '21)

Denzel Thompson-Stout (BFA '21)

Bev Hawn and Capt. Ellis McManus Award (est. 2001)

24 Hours in the Muddy U Projects

Lisa Condoroski Memorial Award for outstanding scholarship

Evan Geller and Catherine Ellis McManus Award (est. 2001)

Dance Partner Project Awards (est. 2010)

Michelle Burns (BFA '20)

Lindsey Jennings (BFA '20)

Faith Stoates (BFA '21)

Leadership Award (est. 2010)

Danielle Moritzko (BFA '19)

Ahmed O. and Dule G. Van-Dance Scholarship for overall outstanding achievements, performance and scholarship

Linda Lehovec (BFA '85)

Kenneth Cowan (BFA '22)

Jeremy Taylor (BFA '22)

Larry Scholarship for overall outstanding achievement

Mary Kate Ford (BFA '20)

William McCollum Memorial Scholarship for exceptional talent in performance and/or Faith Brown (BFA '21)

Courtney R. Kellogg Memorial Scholarship (est. 2015) for an outstanding-equivalent undergraduate study during the academic year

Wanda M. Nettl Prize for Student Choreography (est. 2002)

Faith Stanton (BFA '21)

Danielle Mastricola (BFA '19)

Mauriah Kraker (MFA '19)

Elliot Emadian (MFA '20)

Leah Wilks (MFA '19)

Danzel Thompson-Stout (MFA '21)

Mauriah Kraker (MFA '19)

Jordyn Gibson (BFA '23)

Alyssa Teijeiro-Ficht (BFA '23) for 2019–20 academic year

Connor Knowles (BFA '20)

William McCollum Memorial Scholarship (est. 2015) for an outstanding-equivalent undergraduate study during the academic year

Mauriah Kraker (MFA '19)

Jordyn Gibson (BFA '23), Alyssa Teijeiro-Ficht (BFA '23), Charlie Maybee (MFA '19), Danielle Mastricola (BFA '19), Leah Wilks (MFA '19), Lindsey Jennings (BFA '20), Rachel Rizzuto (MFA '21), Alphonso Pagano (MFA '21), Faith Brown (BFA '21), Charley Thompson (BFA '19), Donovon Martinez (BFA '19), Laila Atfah (BFA '19), Linda, Jeremy B. (2008), Rachel Fordham (FAC 19), Andi Dekeyser (MFA '20), Andrew Godecke (MFA '20), Emily Bledsoe (BFA '20), Faith Brown (BFA '21), Kennedy Cooper (BFA '22), Kara Brown (BFA '21), and Kevin D. Whittaker (MFA '20), and Patrick Johnson (BFA '20), and Jonathan Griner (BFA '20), Allison Taylor Porter (BFA '20).

These awards and scholarships support dance research and/or study for undergraduate and graduate students seeking to further explore interdisciplinary approaches to art-making including, but not limited to: music composition, dance composition, and choreography. These awards are intended to support students in their research and/or study for undergraduate and graduate summer study.

Outstanding Undergraduate Performance Award

Angel Anderson (BFA '21)

Dance Partner Project Award (est. 2010)

Michelle Burns (BFA '20)

Lindsey Jennings (BFA '20)

Faith Stoates (BFA '21)

Outstanding Undergraduate Performance Award

Angel Anderson (BFA '21)

Dance Partner Project Award (est. 2010)

Michelle Burns (BFA '20)

Lindsey Jennings (BFA '20)

Faith Stoates (BFA '21)
transitions

Congratulations to Philip Johnston who was promoted to Associate Teaching Professor.

A warm goodbye to Becky Ferrell who served five years as our Assistant to the Head, A fond farewell to Becky Ferrell who served five years as our Assistant to the Head, and was named the ‘Best New Addition to the DC Dance Scene’ by the Washington City Paper in their Best of DC issue. We know that with Becky in charge, the DC-area dance scene will be rocking.

Congratulations to Philip Johnston who was promoted to Associate Teaching Professor.

We say goodbye to Ryan Luzzo, Space Coordinator/DRK Manager, who kept us organized this year.

Children’s Dance program with magic and imagination for the last three years! The Body Speaks which she taught at her home studio in Longmont, Colorado. She developed her own teaching practice called in memory

Cullen McCubbin (1992-2019), (BFA ’13), passed away on March 3, 2019. An Olympic gymnast, gymnastic coach, and entrepreneur, she contributed to the Illinois Dance Department. After completing her BFA and returning to Illinois as an MFA candidate. He was dancing and teaching at Escuela Nacional de Danza “Morena Celarié” at the time of his death.

Erick Gonzalez (BFA ’98) passed away on January 7, 2019, in El Salvador. Our first and only student from El Salvador, Erick danced with El Teatro de Danza Contemporanea de El Salvador for two years after completing his BFA and returned to Erick Gonzalez (BFA ’98) passed away on January 7, 2019, in El Salvador. Our first and only student from El Salvador, Erick danced with El Teatro de Danza Contemporanea de El Salvador for two years after completing his BFA and returned to

Daly’s research will also focus on slow travel: walking around the block and through the city as a means of attending to choreographic unfolding. She and Leah will be presenting their thesis duet, a creative expression of other things, including teaching and dance class accompaniment. They each shaped our community with compassion, sensitivity and artistic brilliance. As they head out into the world, they will continue to support breadth and depth in their creative and scholarly research.

Graduate Class of 2019: Charlie Maybee, Mauriah Donegan Kraker, and Leah Wilks, Charlie Maybee, Mauriah Donegan Kraker, and Leah Wilks, (BFA), Jenny Oelerich (BFA), Jenna Soldati (BA and BS), Colleen Brown (BA), Alexia

Dance at Illinois graduated 13 undergraduates in 2019. Eight BFA and one MA in Dance degrees. The 2019 graduates are a diverse and broad group, including, in addition to our fine students, students who returned to complete their education after a long interval, and a non-traditional scholar student. Our BFA students will be spreading out across the US from New York to Los Angeles and from Chicago to Atlanta, and the MA student is headed to NYC to pursue performance and choreographic opportunities as well as continuing the collaboration with Mauriah.

Their work will shape the field of contemporary dance in vital and exciting ways. They are each shaping our community with compassion, sensitivity and artistic brilliance. As they head out into the world, they will continue to support breadth and depth in their creative and scholarly research.

Our graduates are passionate about giving back as artists and teachers, showing how vital dance can be to the cultural life of their communities. They know that what went through the page certification program will be teaching yoga right out of school, sales and fitness students with fantastic film editing skills will be offering their services to the dance field, and the graduate is most often using what she learned at dance at illinois as an MFA candidate. He was dancing and teaching at Escuela Nacional de Danza “Morena Celarié” at the time of his death.

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Mauriah Donegan Kraker has created a bilevel program to support breadth and depth in their creative and scholarly research.

Where We Left Off (BFA ’20) in Emmaline Rapier’s in- and out-of-state students, transfer students from other universities, students who returned to complete their education after a long interval, and a non-traditional scholar student. Our BFA students will be spreading out across the US from New York to Los Angeles and from Chicago to Atlanta, and the MA student is headed to NYC to pursue performance and choreographic opportunities as well as continuing the collaboration with Mauriah.

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Where We Left Off (BFA ’20) in Emmaline Rapier’s
newsflash–faculty, students and alums excel in professional and academic arenas

Radioactive Practice is the newest work by Juried Bessie Award-winning Assistant Professor Abby Zbikowski, commissioned by New York Live Arts, to be premiered during their 2019–20 season. This genre-bending dance for ten performers breaks down the physicality, sociocultural functions, and psychological states of an eclectic range of movement forms as a means to expose and challenge the cultural and aesthetic collisions intrinsic in the practice of dance in the contemporary world. This work pushes its collaborative team from the United States, including alumni Alex Gossen (BFA ’17) and dancers from Taiwan, Senegal, and Canada, beyond perceived limits as they create a new tradition built from the inner workings of established forms, including West African dance, hip-hop, modern, and basketball.

I Wonder… by Dr. C. Kemal Nance and Here We Go Again by Elliot Emadian (MFA ’20) were selected to be performed in the Gala Concert at the ACDA Central Region at Missouri State University.

New York’s River to River Festival featured Professor Jennifer Monson’s work Ditch with current DAI students Madeline Mellinger (BFA ’20) and Kaitlin Fox (MFA ’20), as well as Michelle Boulé’s (BFA ’99) Mirror Monologue. Michelle Burns (BFA ’91) received the Distinguished Legacy Award from the University of Illinois, College of Fine and Applied Arts.

MFA alumni Jennifer Hare (MFA ’19), Angie Prater (MFA ’15), Jenessa Young (MFA ’14), Kathleen Kelley (MFA ’13), Kendra Porter (MFA ’11) and roxie perry (MFA ’11) presented work in NYC, presenting innovative areas abstraction, poetry and Leslie Cuyjet (BFA ’19) also performed in what remains, in collaboration with will davis and claudio rinsion.

Chloe Nagle (MFA ’18), Betsy Brandt (MFA ’12), Roxane D’Orleans Juste (MFA ’21), Leah Wilks (MFA ’19), and Kendra Portier (MFA ’18) in Professor Sara Hook’s Janes.

study abroad

Madeline Mellinger (BFA ’20) studied at the Institute of the Arts in Barcelona, Spain; Taylor Allen (BFA ’20) studied dance at the International Academy of Music and Dance in Vienna; and Chloe Nagle (MFA ’18) studied at the University of Illinois, College of Fine and Applied Arts.

Alums, keep in touch! Send us a message on Facebook with your updates and read about your fellow alumni at go.illinois.edu/dancealumni.
be a pivotal force—
donate now

Donors play a pivotal role in the realization of the department’s ambitions to become a national center for the development of dance artists and leaders. The collaborative work generated in our program has been spreading across campus and out into the world, and we can do even more to share what dance can contribute to our society. Dance Partners—our generous donors—provide the core strength for our students, our creative work, and our vision for advancing the art of dance.

We hope you will join us in our mission to cultivate imaginative, innovative, and sustainable artistic lives.

To make a gift, please designate the desired fund on your check, made payable to the University of Illinois Foundation/Department of Dance, and mail to UIF, P.O. Box 3429 Champaign, IL, 61826-3429.

For information on how to donate online, visit giving.illinois.edu.

dance partners

We take this opportunity to recognize and thank all Dance Partners for contributing to the vision of Dance at Illinois. Your gifts are reflected in all of our performances, and we are profoundly grateful for your support. Listed below are the dancers from July 1, 2018–June 30, 2019.

We are mentors and bridge-builders between the Dance Department and the community. We promote, support, celebrate, and engage the public, students, and faculty/staff by making connections, fostering opportunities, and diversifying audiences.

Frances Foster (BA ‘19 and BS ’19), with Cheryl McLain, in Professor Nicholas Hittle and Ibrahim Sabbi’s Picked Up Pieces.

Jennifer Monson in her and nibia pastrana santiago’s (MFA ’12) Choreographies of Disaster: installation 3, photo by Elliot Emadian.

Nicholas Foster II and Ellis C. and Lynn E. Varick, in Professor Jennifer Monson’s choreography, photo by Elliot Emadian.

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2019–2020 performance calendar

Flatlands Dance Film Festival
August 30–31

Studiodance II
October 3–5

Gem of the Ocean

November Dance
November 7–9

Tere O’Connor Dance, KCPA Marquee Series
November 21

Cabaret
February 27–29 and March 5–7

Studiodance Extended
March 27–28

Studiodance
April 2–4

Studiodance Extended
April 10–11

Senior Concerts
December 6–7, April 24–25

2018–2019 faculty/staff list and magazine credits

Dance Faculty
Laura Cleavermonte, Lecturer and Media Coordinator
Laura Chiaramonte, Lecturer and Media Coordinator
Jan Erkert, Department Head and Professor
Rebecca A. Ferrell, Lecturer
Sara Hook, Professor
Philip Johnston, Assistant Teaching Professor
Patricia Knowles, Professor Emerita
Linda Lehovec, Associate Professor
Jennifer Monson, Professor and Graduate Program Director
C. Kemal Nance, Assistant Professor
Rebecca Nettl-Fiol, Professor and Undergraduate Co-Director
Tere O’Connor, Professor
Cynthia Oliver, Professor
Kirstie Simson, Associate Professor
Endalyn Taylor, Assistant Professor
Steffen Konarski, Lecturer in Dance
Molly Johnson, Graduate Teaching Assistant

Student Concerts
December 6–7, April 24–25

Guest Artists
Nia Love
Aaron McGloin

Alumni Guest Artists/Mash-Up Projects
Isiah Asplund (BFA ’17)
Melanie Bales (MFA ’83)
Betsy Brandt (MFA ’12)
Nico Brown (MFA ’14)
Jessica Cornish (BFA ’12)
Paige Cunningham (MFA ’07)
Leslie Cuyjet (BFA ’03)
Charles Gowin (BFA ’15)
Juli Hallihan-Campbell (BFA ’84, MFA ’92)
Grant Hill (BFA ’18)
Lauren Mendelson (BFA ’18)
Alexis Miller (BFA ’18)
Chloe Nagle (MFA ’18)
Momar Ndiaye (MFA ’17)
Angie Pittman (MFA ’15)
Kendra Portier (MFA ’18)
jess pretty (MFA ’16)
Renata Sheppard (MFA ’07)
nibia pastrana santiago (MFA ’12)
Randi Townsend (BFA ’17)
James Washington (BFA ’18)
Aaron Raheim White (BFA ’11)

Accomplices
Sarah Chang
Beverly Hillmer
Cody Jensen
Charlie Maybee
Aaron Wilson

Teaching Assistants
Evvie Allison
Jaylen Clay
Elliot Emadian
William Ervin
Kaitlin Fox
Roxane D’Orleans Juste
Mauriakh Kraker
Charlie Maybee
Rachel Rizzuto
Danzel Thompson-Stout
Leah Wilks

Interns
Faith Brown
Michelle Burns
Nina Crouchelli
Mary Kate Ford
Lindsey Jennings
Rachel Maramba
Danielle Mastricola
LaTosha Pointer

Editing: Mary Kate Ford and Rebecca A. Ferrell
Copy Editing: Anne Jackson
Design: Natalie Fiol, Communications and Marketing at the College of Fine + Applied Arts
Cover Image: LaTosha Pointer (BFA ’19), Stephanie Shaw (BFA ’19), A. Raheim White (BFA ’11), Mya McClellan (BFA ’21), and Jaylen Clay (MFA ’21) in Professor Endalyn Taylor and alum A. Raheim White’s Kueendom of the Shade

Audition dates
Undergraduate Program
October 14, November 9, January 25, February 17
(Change notice at seminar session
Graduate Program
February 24)
Danzel Thompson-Stout (MFA '21), Roxane D’Orleans Juste (MFA ‘21), and Nina Crouchelli (BFA ’20) in Juste’s The Absence of We