

Capstone project:

Developing a partnership to sustain the Extension Division's ballet program.

- ❖ The primary goal of this project is to provide a long-term solution to facility and program growth concerns relating to the Extension Division's *American Ballet Theatre® Certified School of Ballet* program.
- ❖ A secondary goal of this project is to establish a standardized process for evaluating, establishing, implementing, and maintaining new partnerships that Mason Gross may enter into.

Process overview – preparatory, internal planning

1. Clearly define organizational objectives in establishing a partnership
2. Stakeholder identification and analysis
3. Creation of a timeline with clear benchmarks and anticipated outcomes

Process detail: building a partnership – working with a potential partner organization

4. Meet to work through partnership details.
 - Begin to develop rapport on a personal and organizational level
 - Share partnership proposal
 - Certify interest in partnering
5. Gain feedback from key stakeholders
 - Internal consultations
6. Create and formalize the partnership
 - Review and resolve stakeholder concerns
 - Work through and document partnership details
 - Ratify partnership documents

Process detail: launching the partnership

7. Implement the partnership

- Announce and promote the partnership
- Integrate operations
- Establish an advisory board tasked to advise and oversee matters relating to operational and artistic development of the partnership.

8. Steward the partnership

- Work with the advisory board to promote sustainability of the partnership identifying pitfalls and successes, and adjusting appropriate aspects of the partnership accordingly
- Establish a periodic, in-person 'stewardship meeting' at the leadership level.

Washington Rock Dance (WRD), Dunellen & Warren, New Jersey

- ❖ Dean Stauffer recommended Washington Rock Dance.
- ❖ WRD has existing, though informal, ties to the Mason Gross Extension Division and the Mason Gross Dance Department.
- ❖ WRD shares a similar organizational mission with the Extension Division.
- ❖ WRD shares a commitment to ABT's ® *National Training Curriculum*, a central feature of all ABT ® Certified Schools.
- ❖ The opportunity to formally associate with Mason Gross Extension Division, Mason Gross Dance Department, and the American Ballet Theatre is viewed by WRD leadership as an attractive proposition that will positively impact WRD's business prospects, as well as the organization's ability to fulfill its mission.

Challenges I anticipated

- ❖ Bringing clarity to a potentially complex partnership.
- ❖ Setting a standard for communication.
- ❖ Successfully identifying and communicating shared aspirations, overlaps in mission, needs to be met, and benefits of working together
- ❖ Informal and formal leadership skills will be required to gain support, influence key players, to foster effective working relationships, and shepherd parties towards timely project completion and implementation.
- ❖ Competency in planning, especially around financial matters

Challenges I did not anticipate

- ❖ Redirection from partnership with Washington Rock Dance to American Repertory Ballet's educational wing, Princeton Ballet.
- ❖ New complexities:
 - ❑ Mason Gross development interests
 - ❑ New Brunswick Performing Arts Center
 - ❑ Department interests superseding Extension Division interests
 - ❑ Stakeholder 'changes' in position
 - ❑ New ownership of the partnership process
 - ❑ Keeping currently enrolled students and their families onboard.
 - ❑ Maintaining morale within our ABT® faculty & staff

Where we are now

- ❖ An MOA outlining broad partnership terms is in-development. Our new goal is to launch the partnership near-term.
- ❖ The partnership now aims to include....
 - ❑ Combining our two organization's in-school and after-school programs
 - ❑ Merging our precollege ballet classes in New Brunswick branded as *Princeton Ballet at Mason Gross*
 - ❑ Developing a BFA ballet concentration at Mason Gross
 - ❑ Negotiated use of Mason Gross and Princeton Ballet facilities
 - ❑ Maintaining ABT® Certified School standing for *Princeton Ballet at Mason Gross*.