

UNCSA

**PREPARATORY
DANCE**



STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025 – 26 SCHOOL YEAR
A GUIDE FOR DANCERS, PARENTS, AND GUARDIANS

DOCUMENTS FOR EVERYONE

[2025 - 26 Liability Form and Media Release*](#)

[2025 - 26 Handbook Acknowledgement Form*](#)

[2025 - 26 Important Dates Calendar](#)

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*Required for all participants

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WELCOME

Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

Congratulations on a momentous 50th Anniversary School Year! I am delighted to welcome you to the University of North Carolina School of the Arts Preparatory Dance Program for 2025 - 26 season. I am a native of Fayetteville, North Carolina and began training at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts as a Ballet student in the summers beginning in 1995 and high school beginning in 1997. UNCOSA enabled me to fulfill my dream of becoming a professional ballerina, and I believe strongly in cultivating a warm and professional training experience for students to reach their fullest potential with dance. All faculty members are looking forward to working with the students on their technical and artistic development by honoring their stage of human and talent development.

Each generation of students is unique, and we cannot wait to see how our students develop to meet the current landscape of dance as versatile 21st century artists. In the Preparatory Dance Program, we seek to provide students with a solid technical foundation, free of stylistic affectation and well versed in Classical and Contemporary techniques of dance to pursue a multitude of future possibilities-- performance, collegiate, teaching, and lovers of the arts.

New for the 2025-26 school year, we are instituting the ABT JKO School division model to provide greater clarity and celebration at each milestone. Each division (Primary Division, Children's Division, and Upper Division) serves a different purpose in accordance with the stages of talent and human development. That said, all divisions serve a common mission of instilling love for the arts, work ethic, resilience, and determination. Dance skills are life skills, and we seek to partner with your family to building wonderful citizens.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Monica Stephenson". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Monica" and last name "Stephenson" clearly legible.

Monica Stephenson

Director, UNCOSA Preparatory Dance Program

LEADERSHIP AND FACULTY



Monica Stephenson
Director, Preparatory Dance
UNCSA High School Ballet 2001
ABT Affiliate Teacher
ABT Board of Examiners

Former Professional Ballerina, The Washington Ballet, Los Angeles Ballet, The Dance Theatre of Harlem Ensemble

Education: Master of Arts Dance Education,
New York University
PhD Candidate,
Texas Woman's University

Certifications: ABT National Training Curriculum Levels Pre - Primary through 7 and Partnering, Progressing Ballet Technique Level I, Pilates Mat and Apparatus, and GYROTONIC®



Alejandra Doré
Rehearsal Director,
Preparatory Dance
Performance Ensemble

Former Professional Ballerina, The National Ballet Company Dominican Republic, Maryland Ballet, Ballet Concierto, Baillet Compañia Nacional de Danza del Ecuador and Winston-Salem Festival Ballet.

Certifications: ABT National Training Curriculum Levels Pre - Primary through 7 and Partnering, Vaganova Syllabus, Progressing Ballet Technique Level I



Lauren Alzamora
Alumna, Preparatory Dance
UNCSA High School Ballet 2001

Former Professional Ballerina, Ballet Hispanico, Aspen Santa Fe Ballet, Ballet Tech, Battery Dance Company

Bachelor of Arts Dance
St. Mary's College

Dance Educator, Arts Based School
South

Certifications: ABT National Training Curriculum Levels Pre - Primary through 3, Pilates Mat and Apparatus



Courtney Stewart
ABT Affiliate Teacher

Former Professional Ballerina
Soloist, San Francisco Ballet

Bachelor of Arts Performing Arts
St. Mary's College

Certifications: ABT National Training Curriculum Levels Pre - Primary through 5, Progressing Ballet Technique Levels 1 and 2



Claire Ketner

Bachelor of Arts Dance and English,
Salem College

Former Faculty and School
Administrator, Brooklyn Ballet



Anna Onipko

Alumna, Kiev State Choreographic Academy

Former Professional Ballerina, Kiev Ballet and Opera Theater for Youth, National Ballet of Ukraine

BFA Dance, University of Texas El Paso
Certifications: ABT National Training Curriculum Levels Pre - Primary through 5



Jiwon Ha

BFA Dance, Pusan National University
Master of Education Dance, Pusan National University

Dance Faculty, Elon University

Certifications: Progressing Ballet Technique Level I



Fernando Carrillo

Assistant Professor, UNCSCA School of Dance

Former Professional Dancer: Ailey II, Ballet Hispanico, Lion King Broadway Tour

Former Faculty The Julliard School, Butler University, Marymount Manhattan College, The JKO School at ABT, Ailey School



Gevorg Khachatryan

Alum Yerevan State Choreographic College

Former Professional Dancer, Armenian Theater of Opera and Ballet, Triad International Ballet

Former Faculty, Burlington Dance Center and Artistic Motion School of the Arts

Certifications: ABT National Training Curriculum Levels Pre - Primary through 5

DANCE MEDICINE PROFESSIONALS

Physical Therapists:

Denise Tickle

Dancer safety and healthy development is of extreme importance to us here at the UNCSCA Preparatory Dance Program. We are honored to continue our relationship with Denise Tickle of Wake Forest Baptist Health. Denise Tickle, PT has been a Physical Therapist at Wake Forest Baptist Health since 1990. She currently works at the Stratford Road facility serving primarily a sports population.

Denise can be reached by email at: dtickle@wakehealth.edu.

Angie Koonin

Angie Koonin is the owner of Performance Driven PT with over 20 years of physical therapy and athletic training experience on the field, backstage, and in clinical settings. Angie currently works part-time as the physical therapist at UNCSCA School of Dance. Her education includes a Master of Physical Therapy and a Bachelor of Arts with an Athletic Training concentration from UNC-Chapel Hill. She has additionally trained at New York University's Harkness Center for Dance Injuries.

Angie can be reached by email at: akoonin@performancedrivenpt.com.

Pediatric Sports Medicine:

David Michael Popoli, MD

Dr. David Popoli is board certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation and sports medicine. His clinical interests include pediatric/adolescent/young adult sports medicine, musculoskeletal overuse injuries, sports-related concussion and throwing injuries. In addition to working with athletes, he has a special interest in performing arts medicine and has spent years working with dancers, musicians, actors and vocalists. He is the medical director for the Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Performing Arts Medicine Program.

Dr. Popoli's Office can be reached at 336-903-7845.

ALUMNI AND HISTORY

Founded in 1975, the Preparatory Dance Program was the brainchild of founding Dean of Dance, Robert Lindgren and his wife, Sonja Tyven. The Program's mission was to seek out gifted young children in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County public school system and offer them after-school dance classes to create access to high quality training and to build a bridge to the School of Dance High School program.

Dayna Fox led the Preparatory Dance Program from 1989 – 2014, Preparatory Dance and UNCSA High School alum, Matthew Donnell from 2014-2018, and Susan Brooker from 2018-2023. Currently the Program is under the direction of UNCSA High School alum, Monica Stephenson.

For 50 years, the Preparatory Dance Program has grown immensely and has continued this path honing the talents of hundreds of young children in our community and beyond. Many students who began their training in the program have been accepted into UNCSA's high school and college divisions and have become members of major dance companies across the country and around the world. Others have utilized their skills to teach, mentor, parent, and pursue a variety of professional careers. Some of the Preparatory Dance alumni and their professional companies include:

Lauren Alzamora Aspen Santa Fe Ballet	Sierra Armstrong American Ballet Theatre	Daniel Cooper Boston Ballet
Jerome Johnson New York City Ballet	Lydia McRae Nashville Ballet	Kelley Potter American Ballet Theatre
Stephen Gunter Ballet Rhode Island	Claire Kretzschmar New York City Ballet	Matthew Donnell Kansas City Ballet

MISSION OF PREPARATORY DANCE

“Training the Entire Artist by Training the Entire Person”

“We believe dance training in the Preparatory Dance Program builds life skills of commitment, work ethic, teamwork, and self confidence to become great artists, parents, mentors, and citizens. Success is broad and our mission is to provide a high-quality training environment reflective of the diversity of our community that provides a foundation to professional performance, teaching, collegiate study, and beyond.” – [UNCSA Preparatory Dance](#)

MISSION OF UNCSA SCHOOL OF DANCE

“Through our rigorous and nurturing conservatory experience, you will explore a diverse, world-class repertory that develops talented young performers into technically sound, artistically sensitive and stylistically versatile **professional dancers.**” – [UNCSA School of Dance](#)

WHY ARE THOSE DIFFERENT? STAGES OF DANCE TALENT DEVELOPMENT

The Preparatory Dance Program begins at age 3. Professional study is not age appropriate nor will the vast majority of children become a professional athlete of any kind. Dance is an activity that can be enjoyed and has benefits for all. We believe in honoring the three stages of dance talent development, and each phase has a different goal. One: “the early years” (sampling years), Two: “the middle years” (development years), and Three: the “later years” (finishing years). In the Primary Division we are working to build a love of movement as kids sample a lot of different activities. In the Children’s Division, we are developing a strong technical foundation for future dance study. In the Upper Division we are preparing students for the “finishing phase:” pre-professional or high-level collegiate study. Not all children will pass through all three phases of dance talent development at UNCSA, but they will have the best-in-class dance education for a variety of endeavors in life. Video: [8 Lessons Learned](#) by [Jules Szabo](#), UNCSA School of Dance alum and adjunct faculty.

CURRICULUM AND DIVISIONS OF STUDY

Preparatory Dance ballet faculty are certified in the **American Ballet Theatre (ABT) National Training Curriculum** which combines solid technical and artistic training, dancer health, and principles of child development. Classical ballet vocabulary is developed progressively through the ABT Curriculum with an emphasis on sound body alignment, musicality, coordination and attention to dynamic detail.

The Preparatory Dance Program consists of ABT Curriculum levels Pre-Primary – Level 5. Character steps to include the Mazurka and Polka are taught in the ABT Curriculum as well as age- appropriate strengthening and stretching exercises. Men's Technique and Pre-Pointe or Pointe exercises are added at Levels 1-5. A Young Boys class is also offered for Primary C and Level 1 students.

Rounding out the Preparatory Dance Program curriculum is Progressing Ballet Technique and Body Conditioning, Contemporary, Jazz, and Performance Ensemble to build versatile, well-rounded dancers. The Preparatory Dance Program consists of three divisions honoring the phases of dance and human development. The research study on the three phases of dance talent development is [here](#).

Divisions of Study following ABT JKO School Division Structure [Here](#)

Primary Division “The Early Years”

Ages 3 – 7

Goals: Build a love for dance, creativity, motor skills, coordination, and joy!

Completion: Primary Division Graduation in Primary C

Children's Division “The Developing Years”

Ages 8 – 12 / Levels 1A – 3B

Goals: Strong dance foundation that can be cultivated in a broad spectrum of ways.

Completion: Children's Division Graduation in Level 3B

Upper Division by Invitation*

Ages 11 – 18 / Levels 4A – Advanced Training Program

Goals: Rigorous technical and artistic study towards a pre-professional and/or collegiate dance conservatory program. Preparatory Dance is a feeder program to UNCSA School of Dance.

*Careful consideration and conversation on dancer goals, aptitude, and family desire for the training commitment are necessary.

Completion: High School Senior – or – earlier admission to a pre-professional conservatory such as the UNCSA high school.

Since the 2024-25 school year, Preparatory Dance does not end in 8th grade, and thus, does not necessarily constitute a program graduate; some students may continue through 12th grade.

CURRICULUM APPROACH

The ABT National Training Curriculum Bamboo Theory is a metaphor that compares a dancer's training to the growth of a bamboo plant:

In the early years, bamboo grows very little above ground—but it is developing a deep, strong root system underground.

Similarly, in ballet training, a student may not seem to make dramatic progress at first, but they are building the essential foundation: alignment, strength, coordination, and stability.

Once the foundation is strong, just like bamboo, the dancer's progress becomes rapid and noticeable.

This theory emphasizes patience, proper development, and long-term growth in dance. We recognize this approach is not for everyone. Some schools and curriculums do move faster, with more advanced material at earlier ages. At Preparatory Dance, we trust in the ABT curriculum because it is measurable, assessable, and evidence-based. We know that dancers training in this way start to bypass their peers because they have the right foundation and muscle memory for exponential growth.

Levels Primary – 3 do move quite slowly in the ABT curriculum laying the roots, by Level 4 students begin really “dancing”—putting all the elements together in combination and with complex movements, and by Level 5, the curriculum is hard with material being taught and often done at a fast pace.

You may read more about the ABT curriculum's bamboo which is our teaching approach [here](#).

FLEX PROGRAM

We recognize that after Level 3B, not all students are working towards pre-professional or collegiate study in ballet, but want really, good dance classes! The new Flex Program allows dancers at an Intermediate to Advanced Level to continue quality dance instruction in the Triad community while pursuing other interests, performance opportunities, and goals. Students may be placed in the Flex Program following the completion of the Children's Division, by request, or by audition if they are new to Preparatory Dance. The commitment is twice per week: Wednesdays (Ballet) and Saturdays (Ballet and Intermediate Jazz – or – Senior Jazz). Performance opportunities include in-studio showings for Jazz Technique and *Defilé* in Spring Performance for Ballet Technique.

BROADER PROFESSIONAL PATHS

We recognize there are multiple ways to be a professional dancer outside of a ballet company or a contemporary company known in the industry as “Concert Dance”. Though our students grow up with Concert Dance as the focus at UNCSA, please consider all the ways people dance professionally: musical theater, Rockettes, Cirque de Soliel, and commercial dance, to name a few. The Flex Program can keep the technique in top form while allowing time for tap classes, voice lessons, acting classes, and community theater. Check out what we offer in the [Community Music School](#) and [Acting Out](#) to help cultivate those Triple Threats! [Student Success Video](#): Amelia Emmerich created her own Flex Program with Adult Ballet and Senior Jazz and is a rising Freshman at New York University School of Drama! A Teacher is a wonderful professional career path. [Student Success Story](#): Hayden Creech, is now a Level III PBT Instructor and just passed her certification in the ABT National Training Curriculum.

ADVANCED TRAINING PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOL DANCERS

We recognize that during high school some students may want to work towards pre-professional or collegiate study in dance but with a broader dance education. The majority of university dance programs are contemporary-based, and the UNCSA Contemporary Program accepts both 11th and 12th grade high school students. In the Advanced Training Program, students have a mature and more diverse dance education by adding Composition, Improvisation, Horton and additional Modern techniques, and Contemporary Repertory to prepare them for such opportunities. Annual performances include in-studio showings for Creative Practice and Jazz Technique, Contemporary Repertory in Spring Performance, and Group pieces at YAGP Winston-Salem and the NC Festival of Dance. More information on the Advanced Training Program can be found [here](#). [Student Success Video](#): Lillian Morton, Accepted to UNCSA BFA Program in Contemporary Dance.

PROGRESSION AND EVALUATION

Final evaluations, assessments, and level placement are determined by the collective Preparatory Dance faculty and leadership. We meet as a faculty team on each student. The faculty team is highly experienced and has extensive expertise in dance education, talent development, and childhood development.

Written Evaluations and Mentorship Meetings

Mid-Year Evaluations are provided for students in Levels 1 - 5 and Advanced Training Program. Final Evaluations are provided for dancers in Levels Primary A through Level 5 and Advanced Training Program. Dancers in the Upper Division also receive semi-annual mentorship meetings on their progression and goals.

Assessment Classes

A formal, adjudicated assessment class will be conducted in May to assess each student's acquisition of the vocabulary of their level in the ABT Curriculum. Occasionally, American Ballet Theatre staff will adjudicate the curriculum exam and provide the evaluation which gives an outside perspective on dancer training. An informal assessment class is conducted for Pre-Primary and Primary Classes.

Level Placement

Assessment classes are merely a snapshot of how your dancer comprehends the curriculum for their level of study. The faculty team considers their full body of work over the course of the school year to include multiple ways of knowing: theoretical (of the mind) and somatic (of the body). At the end of the year, students may receive a level placement. Our goal is to always progress a student to the next level with their peers. Students will repeat a class level if they need longer to grasp that level's curriculum or to develop further physically, emotionally, or socially for the next level. It is also possible that students will not be invited to re-enroll for the following year if the faculty does not feel the student has the aptitude to continue up the progressively challenging curriculum. Level placement is final. The faculty team assesses students daily in class and will contact the family when the recommendation is to move to another level.

Students may be asked to depart the school at the end of the year or mid-year if their behavior is disruptive to the overall progress of the class. *A healthy, sustainable family partnership is critical to continuance in the program.*

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE UPPER DIVISION AND PRE-PROFESSIONAL PATH

Participation in the Preparatory Dance Program including the Upper Division does not guarantee acceptance into any program for pre-professional study including at UNCSA. All professional schools have a separate entry point for students that have the talent, facility, aptitude, and potential to train towards a professional performance career. At UNCSA, that opportunity arises for rising 9th graders to audition for the High School program in Ballet and rising 11th graders to audition for the High School program in Contemporary. It is very rare for any student to become a professional dancer, and the process is extremely competitive and selective for that level of study.

In the Upper Division we are committed to being a program that operates with the expertise, curriculum, and rigor of schedule to give students the best possible opportunity to audition well for such pre-professional training programs. Students in any level of the school are welcome to audition for the UNCSA high school program. Students that are in Level 5 have the best possible experience and outcome as they have received extensive training in the steps required at the audition.

Though we are a feeder to an exceptional pre-professional conservatory, the UNCSA School of Dance, students are encouraged to audition for multiple pre-professional programs as each place may see something different in the student. Our students have success in admittance to other top programs around the country, and we can provide connections and audition support as needed for Upper Division dancers.

What do Pre-Professional Programs Often Look For?

CONSIDERATIONS BY PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

Some factors are controllable by the dancer such as deliberate practice, work ethic, and determination, and some factors are simply not controllable by the dancer as selection into such programs may include professional-level physical facility that aligns with the demands of a rigorous conservatory program. Professional ballet facility is not body type, but rather, refers to the physical capabilities of the body that are necessary for a dancer to perform ballet at a high level. Facility for dance simply refers to what one's body can do. This includes:

1. **Flexibility and Extensions:** The ability to stretch and move joints through a wide range of motion, particularly in the hips, legs, and back. This is crucial for achieving the extensions, arabesques, and other movements required in ballet.

2. **Strength:** Ballet requires significant muscle strength, especially in the legs, core, and feet, to perform challenging movements and the stability to sustain advanced positions over time.

3. **Turnout:** The natural ability to rotate the legs outward from the hips, which is fundamental to most ballet positions and movements. While turnout can be improved with training, a certain degree of natural turnout is necessary for advanced ballet technique.

4. **Flexible Feet for Pointe Work, Jumps, and Balletic Line:** The aesthetic of ballet often emphasizes well-pointed feet to enhance the line of the leg.

- *A minimum of a straight line from the student's chin to the top of their foot, when pointed, is necessary for them to get fully onto pointe. More information on the Pencil Test is on p. 31.*

Having these attributes allows a dancer to perform the technical demands of ballet safely and efficiently. While many of these can be developed with training, some are influenced by a dancer's natural anatomy, and professional training programs such as UNCSA often look for a combination of natural ability and developed skill. The Preparatory Dance Program aids dancers in building their facility with safe, age-appropriate stretching beginning at age 3 as well as strengthening with Progressing Ballet Technique and additional core focused work to include strength training, Pilates, GYROTONIC®, yoga, and other modalities. Additional stretching and cross training is advised outside of dance to aid children in building their facility (their instrument) from an early age. Limited increases in flexibility occur once a dancer enters growth spurts and puberty. More information about safe stretching practices can be found in the

ABT Healthy Dancer book available for purchase [here](#).

SUMMER STUDY

Primary Division

Storybook Ballet Camp for Ages 5 - 7

Students may participate in a half day, story themed one-week camp that is fun, inspiring, and bursting with activity, crafts, and creativity. Boys and girls study ballet, tap, African and creative movement with time for a little snack and drink. Capacity is limited to 15 dancers per class. Register early to secure a place!

Children's Division

Young Dancer Summer Intensive for Ages 8 - 12

Students experience a focused two-weeks of dance in their respective levels of the ABT National Training Curriculum. Classes include ballet, pointe or pre-pointe, men's technique, West African dance, contemporary or jazz, and Progressing Ballet Technique. Classes run Monday - Friday from 9:00 - 3:45 pm. Dancers will have 15 minutes between each class and a half-hour lunch break. The intensive concludes with an informal presentation of their classwork.

Upper Division

UNCSA 4 Week Intensive for Ages 12 and Up in Classical or Contemporary (ATP)

- Or - Four to Five Week Summer Intensive at Recommended Programs

Full summer intensives provide four to five weeks of cross-disciplinary dance training to fit the needs of serious dance artists. Under the instruction of renowned teachers and distinguished guest artists, students will develop their technique and hone their artistic skills.

Mini-August Intensive

Incoming Level 4, 5, and ATP Students

UNCSA Preparatory Dance

Ramp up safely for the school year by training 3 days per week after school with Ballet, Progressing Ballet Technique, and Pointe. Students experience training rooted in reinforcing proper body mechanics to include alignment and use of turnout before jumping into the school year.

All students in Levels 3 are strongly encouraged to participate in 2 weeks of summer study and Levels 4 through ATP a minimum of 4 weeks to progress to the next level with their peers due to the immense improvement that students that select to train in the summer make at intensives. To best benefit the progression of all students, dancers that do not train in the summers will be able to receive a final level placement at the beginning of the school year.

ADULT PROGRAM

Want to try ballet or return to ballet after some time off? Adult ballet is for you!

Beginner I

Adult beginner ballet is designed for dancers aged 16 and older to give a foundational understanding of ballet vocabulary and body mechanics for the steps. The class is appropriate for those that have never taken ballet before, have minimal dance experience, want to strengthen their foundational knowledge, or have studied dance previously and are returning after years away from the art form. Students will learn basic ballet steps from Level 1 of the American Ballet Theatre National Training Curriculum.

Mondays: 5:30 - 6:30 pm

Beginner II

Adult beginner ballet II is designed for dancers aged 16 and older to build upon the foundational understanding of ballet vocabulary and body mechanics for the steps learned in Adult ballet beginner I. Students will continue to learn ballet steps from Level 1 and begin Level 2 of the American Ballet Theatre National Training Curriculum. Previous experience or completion of Beginner I is recommended.

Mondays: 6:30 - 7:30 pm

Intermediate

Adult intermediate ballet is designed for experienced dancers aged 16 and older to build on the information learned in Beginner Ballet. This class introduces more complex movements and combinations of steps while still strengthening foundational technique. Students that have taken several semesters of Beginner Ballet or have extensive former experience are encouraged to progress to Intermediate Ballet. Students will learn ballet steps from Levels 2 through 4 of the American Ballet Theatre National Training Curriculum with options for differentiated learning according to experience level.

Prior ballet experience with an understanding of ballet vocabulary and alignment are needed to participate.

Saturdays: 9:00 - 10:30 am

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

I. Saturday Elective: Performance Ensemble

- *Youth Ensemble* Ages 7-10: Primary C and Level 1
- *Junior Ensemble* Ages 9-13: Levels 2 and 3
- *Senior Ensemble* Ages 10-14: Levels 4 and 5

Fall:*The Nutcracker Story for Young Audiences (School of Dance Nutcracker p31)*

Spring: Classical Story Ballet in Spring Performance

Students that commit to Performance Ensemble enrich their training through developing technique and artistry while practicing and performing age-appropriate classical ballet repertoire. All students are highly encouraged to participate in Performance Ensemble to enhance their training beyond the classroom to the stage. Students learn how to perform with their peers, and the experience enhances their social bonds and love of dance.

Performance Ensemble Entails (per Semester):

- 13 Saturday Rehearsals per Semester (Possible makeup rehearsal if a Saturday is a vacation day for Thanksgiving and Memorial Day breaks).
- Theater Production Week
- In-Studio Presentations for Community Access
- Community Outreach Activities

2. Celebrate Dance! Upper Division Solos and Lower and Upper Division Graduation

3. Spring Performance All Dancers: *Defilé and/or Contemporary*

All students in Level 1A – 5 and the Flex Program perform in the annual *Defilé: A Ballet Curriculum Demonstration*. The short class piece is rehearsed at the end of class times in May. Students must have good class attendance and attend stage rehearsals during Production Week to participate.

Please note: Costumes and theater production rental and expenses are covered through the Preparatory Dance Production Fund through the UNCSEA Foundation Office. All ticket proceeds from the performances go directly to the Preparatory Dance Fund at the UNCSEA Foundation Office. We appreciate your support in our making the performances possible.

CASTING GUIDELINES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Please note: Each year a ballet is selected to fit the current student body's unique gifts, strengths, and areas where challenge will be beneficial. Each year the student body is different, and thus, pointe opportunities, soloist opportunities, etc. will not be the same every year. Occasionally, Prep alumni may join in principal roles such as with *Sleeping Beauty*, and in other years, it's a great fit to have a current Prep student in the lead role such as in *Giselle*. Preparatory Dance faculty and leadership take great care in casting with an effort to appropriately challenge all students, but things will not be the same from year-to-year due to the evolving student body and various choreographic demands.

We value the collective experience as the corps de ballet is the heart of every ballet. We recognize the push towards individualism, but ballet is groupwork at its core. Corps de ballet skills are valuable as all professional dancers must be able to do corps de ballet extremely well; it is the starting place for all professional dancers.

Merit-Based Casting

- Casting at UNCSA is determined by merit—technical ability, artistry, and performance quality, as demonstrated in both classwork and adjudicated auditions.
- Pointe soloist roles are open to all students in the level(s) at the necessary skill and readiness. Every dancer in the level auditions for a pointe soloist role(s).
- Casting is not based on:
 - Age
 - Grade level
 - Level placement
 - Years in the program
 - Seniority
 - Previous casting history

Audition & Feedback Process

- All students in the Upper Division are encouraged to audition.
- Students may request feedback on their audition from faculty to understand areas for improvement by emailing prepdance@uncsa.edu. A meeting with the child and their parent or guardian for feedback may be requested as well.
- Feedback is intended as a learning tool to support growth and development in future auditions.

Finality of Casting Decisions

- Casting decisions are final and non-negotiable.
- Roles are assigned based on faculty evaluation of each dancer's performance in the audition and in class.
- While feedback is available for educational purposes, casting decisions will not be altered based on feedback requests or personal appeals.

Our Commitment

- Casting decisions are made with a commitment to dancer health and educational value for all dancers.
- Faculty assess technical execution, musicality, stage presence, and role suitability in alignment with professional standards.
- The program fosters a professional audition environment with an adjudicator to prepare students for industry expectations.
- Dancers are encouraged to approach auditions with resilience and professionalism, understanding that casting reflects current readiness and not overall potential.

THEATER GUIDELINES AND BACKSTAGE / FRONT OF HOUSE VOLUNTEERS

Please review the Theater Guidelines with your family for all Prep productions:

What to Expect

Nighttime Rehearsals: Some rehearsals and performances may run late into the evening. Please plan accordingly for rest and meals.

Rehearsals May Run Over: While we aim to stay on schedule, artistic and technical adjustments can extend rehearsal.

Spacing Rehearsal: This is when dancers get used to the stage layout. It is essential for safety and performance readiness.

Technical Rehearsal: Includes lighting, sound, and stage cues. Dancers must be patient and ready for long pauses.

Dress Rehearsal: A full run-through in costume with makeup. This is treated as a performance, so focus and professionalism are expected.

Please Note: *All theater rehearsals are closed unless otherwise indicated.*

What to Do & Why

1. No Eating in Costume:

Protects costumes from stains and damage. Water only while in costume (and with care).

2. Protect Costumes While Touching Up Makeup:

Use a towel or cape to cover costumes when applying or fixing makeup. Avoid touching costumes with hands that have makeup or lotion.

3. No Talking Backstage:

Sound carries easily; even whispers can be distracting to performers and the audience.

Stay focused and respectful of the performance environment.

4. Listen to Adults:

Faculty, crew, and volunteers give instructions to ensure smooth rehearsals and performances.

Following directions promptly and respectfully ensures safety and efficiency.

5. Stand Back & Stay Against the Wings:

Dancers waiting in the wings should stay as far back as possible to avoid being seen by the audience. Dancers should also be against the curtain as to not be visible by the audience.

Students are to run fully offstage deep into the wing in character.

Do not lean out to watch performances while waiting.

Do not practice in the wings (students can accidentally hit/move the curtains and can easily run into each other, especially while coming on and off stage).

6. Safety Considerations:

Do not share makeup, particularly eye and lip makeup as this can easily spread germs that can cause pink eye and respiratory illnesses.

No running and/or practicing backstage as floors are generally slippery.

After Rehearsal

1. Notes:

Dancers may receive feedback from teachers and directors. This is an essential part of growth and preparation. All dancers are expected to attend notes sessions for all productions. Listen carefully, write down the corrections, and apply the corrections for the next run.

2. Costume Removal & Care:

Hang up costumes properly or return them as instructed.

Ensure all costume pieces and accessories are accounted for before leaving.

3. Take the Opportunity to Watch Other Dancers:

When permitted, watching peers perform helps dancers learn and builds comradery. Be respectful and quiet when observing from the audience or wings.

By following these guidelines, dancers and families help maintain a professional, respectful, and efficient performance environment.

Performance Volunteers

We need parents, guardians, alumni, family, and friends to volunteer both backstage and in the lobby to ensure performances are safe and educational. Proper backstage supervision ensures students get on stage at the right time without added stress and anxiety to their performance experience. Occasionally there are quick changes of costumes and ample backstage support make it feasible. If your dancer is performing, we ask that you to volunteer for at least one shift. This approach prevents any one parent from bearing the brunt of the responsibility and ensures all families get time in the audience to see their dancer shine.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID

All Preparatory Dance families are eligible to apply for financial aid through the UNCSA Foundation Office. Annually, our Nutcracker Boutique, *Nutcracker Story for Young Audiences*, UNCSA Annual Days of Giving, and Spring Performance tickets raise funds to maintain our pool of financial aid resources. Our goal is to ensure cost is not a barrier to participation for any family in the program. Priority for awards are given based on documented financial need. For the 2024 – 25 school year, Preparatory Dance extended over \$26,000 in financial aid to our student body.

Named scholarships to include the Dayna Fox Scholarship and the Nina Danilova Scholarship are awarded to current students according to available funds in those specific scholarship accounts. Scholarships are assessed annually by the Preparatory Dance Faculty based on the financial aid application, classroom participation, passion, potential, and talent for dance.

To apply for financial assistance, the application and documentation must be submitted annually by September 1st. The application and requirements can be found at this [link](#).

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT

Online registration and payment is through the ASAP registration system. The link is: <https://uncsa.asapconnected.com/?org=5375>. The withdrawal policy may be viewed at this [link](#).

Payment plans are available for all students by emailing prepdance@uncsa.edu. Families are encouraged to register for all classes and desired electives at one time, so every monthly payment is consistent for the school year and on one payment plan.

Payment required at registration for full-year classes: 1/8 payment of annual fee, 7 equal additional installment payments as follows:

- 1/8 at registration or by September 1
 - 1/8 no later than October 1
 - 1/8 no later than November 1
 - 1/8 no later than December 1
 - 1/8 no later than January 1
 - 1/8 no later than February 1
 - 1/8 no later than March 1
 - 1/8 no later than April 1

Final Payments are due no later than April 30.

Families who are behind on payments will not be allowed to attend class or perform until their account is current. Students will not receive a level placement which opens up registration for the upcoming school year until the previous school year balance is paid. If your family is experiencing financial hardship, please let the Preparatory Dance administration know.

Payments may be made online at any time (preferred). Payments by phone may be made weekdays during office hours by calling: 336-734-2848. Please note that during busy times there may be delays reaching us by phone. Do not give payments to any instructor or administrator.

Payments by check should be payable to UNCSA, with the student's name and Preparatory Dance in the memo line.

Mail checks to this address:

UNCSA Community & Summer Programs

1533 S. Main Street

Winston-Salem, NC 27127

PURPOSE OF FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Your tuition dollars only cover what it cost to run dance classes—faculty and overhead. However, we supplement the dance education for all with your support.

Fees that are not included in the Preparatory Dance tuition are: theater rental and tech crew fees, costume purchase and rental fees, master class fees, assessment and audition class adjudication, competition fees, and guest choreographer fees to name a few. All these opportunities come from the fundraising activity to the Preparatory Dance Education and Production Funds through the UNCSA Foundation Office.

Fees that dance schools typically charge to cover these expenses:

- Production Fee (tech crew, theater rental, etc.)
- Costume Fee (rent or own)
- Master Class Fees
- Competition Fees
- Convention Fees
- Adjudicated Assessment
- Private Lesson and Choreography Fees
- Registration Fee

To sustain this model, we need your volunteerism to the four main Foundation Office fundraisers for Preparatory Dance: Nutcracker Boutique, *Nutcracker Story for Young Audiences*, Spring Performance, and UNCSA Annual Days of Giving.

Your contribution of time and / or spreading the word is just as if not more beneficial than monetary! We know families are already sacrificing so much financially for dance training. You make a difference by volunteering for one shift of Nutcracker Boutique or sharing our UNCSA Days of Giving page on your social media and with friends, family, and local business connections. More information about the UNCSA Foundation Office can be found [here](#). Let Ms. Stephenson know if you have a fundraising idea for the program!

UNIFORMS, HAIR, AND SUPPLIES

Uniforms

Preparatory Dance partners with local store, [2Fierce Dancewear](#) to provide uniforms for each division. Uniforms may be purchased at the store or online at the Preparatory Dance [homepage](#). Please follow the uniform specifications carefully as students do perform in their uniform items. Students may select their own tights and shoes that fit best and reflect their skin-tone preference.

Hair Guidelines

- Female-identifying students' hair **MUST** be put up securely in a bun or French twist at all levels of study Pre-Primary through Advanced Training Program.
- Braids, cornrows, and other natural hairstyles are welcome and may be put into the ballet bun or French twist.
- For examples of how to do buns with all hair types and textures, please view: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUC3WzQrT6s>
- No “Perfect Bun” sponges, hair beads, ponytails, or long bangs will be permitted.

For students of all genders with short hair, please secure away from the face with a thin elastic headband that goes all the way around the head for security.

Supplies

- Please bring hairpins, bobby pins, hairnets, hairspray, etc., to class at all times.
- Ladies should be encouraged to practice putting up their hair by themselves at the appropriate age.
- Local drug and beauty supplies stores sell a variety of styles and colors of hairpins, bobby pins, and hairnets. Please make sure your child's hair net matches their hair color and that you purchase strong hairpins.
- Students on pointe should have blister care, small scissors, and a needle and thread in their dance bag at all times. Please help your dancer on pointe learn basic sewing skills for quick repairs.
- Students in Level 1 and Above should keep a small, inexpensive notebook in their dance bag. Please encourage your dancer to write down key corrections, notes, and goals and to review the material in their notebook periodically. Any dancer that observes due to sickness or injury will need to use their ballet notebook to take notes.
- Level 3 and Above: Medium Strength Theraband, yoga mat, and exercise ball according to these [dimensions](#) for all pre-pointe and Progressing Ballet Technique classes.

DROP OFF AND PICKUP PROCEDURE

Community Programs Drop Off Location: 1960 DeMille Drive, Winston Salem, NC 27127.

Parking is Limited. After 6 pm and all day on Saturdays, families are welcome to park in Lot R for Students and Commuters (the gravel lot at the top of the hill beside the Chapel Street gate). Limited visitor parking is also available in the vicinity. Do not park anywhere that says "Reserved."

Pre-Primary Ballet

Pre-Primary 3 and 4 families, we ask that parents and guardians park and accompany their dancer into the building. Please wait for the duration of the 45-minute class in the event your dancer needs assistance.

Student Drop Off and Escort: Levels Primary A, Primary B, Primary C, Level 1, and Level 2

Meet the Preparatory Dance administrator 10 minutes before class and 5 minutes after class time at the Community Drop Off location: 1960 DeMille Drive. Students will be escorted to class and returned to the drop-off location. Please ensure your student is dressed and does not need assistance with hair or uniform. Parents will need to accompany their dancer into the building if assistance is needed. Families that miss the drop off time before class will have to park and bring their student into the building for class. Preparatory Dance staff will stay with the dancers at the drop off location 5 minutes after class ends. Any student that is not picked up on time will have to come back to the Dance building to wait with an administrator.

Student Drop Off: Levels 3 - Advanced Training Program

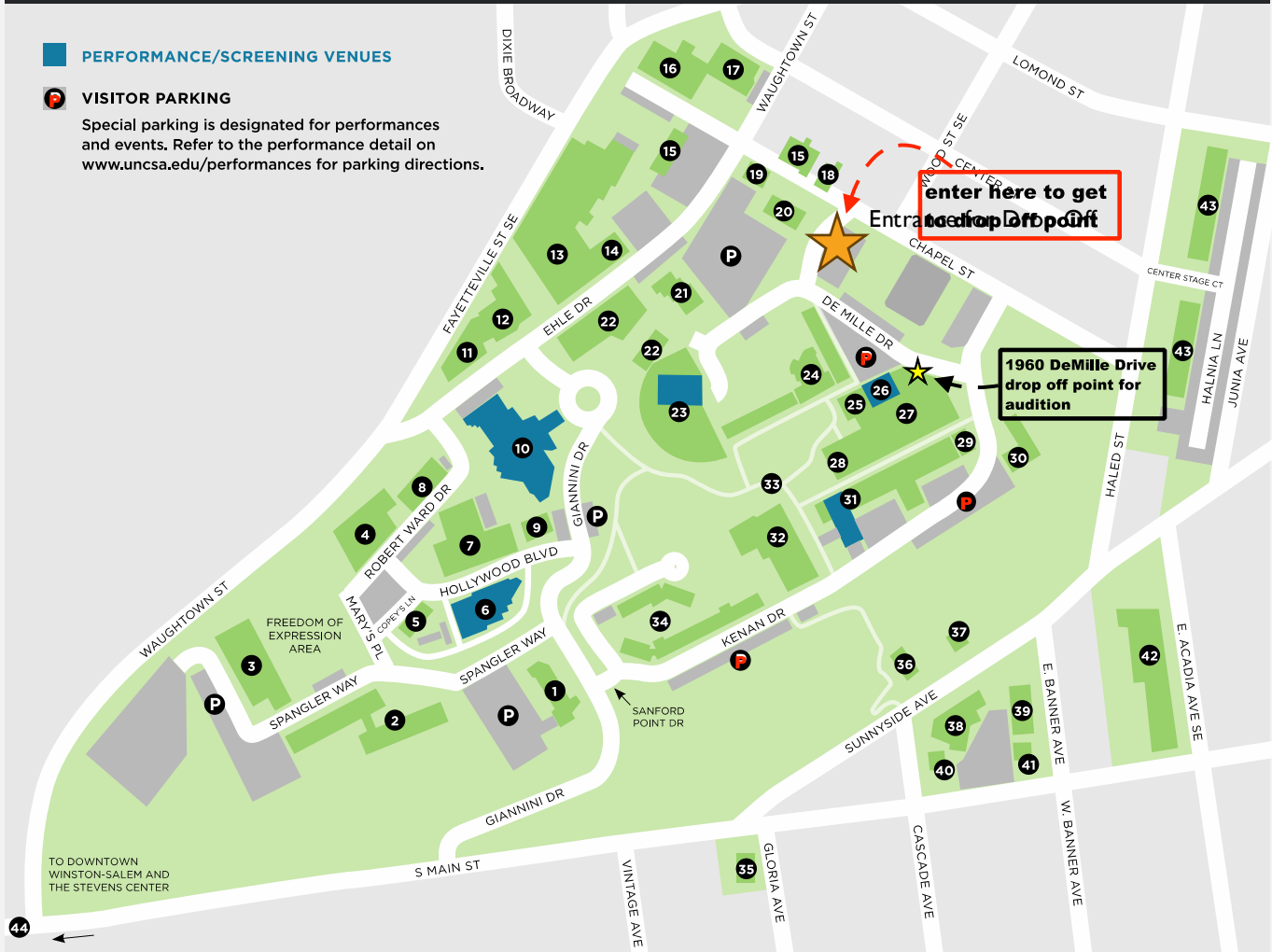
Students May Be Dropped off 15 - 20 minutes prior to their class time and picked up promptly when class ends at the Community Drop Off location: 1960 DeMille Drive. Students are to enter the building with their access card and walk directly to class to meet their teacher. Supervision is only provided at the dance studios (not at the drop-off location or in transit to the studios). Dancers that do not come directly to class will not be permitted to stay in the program. For safety, please ensure your dancer is not waiting at the drop off location for pickup at 7:15 pm.

All parents and guardians are welcome to come inside if you do not want to drop your student off at the drop off location. Supervision at the drop off location is only provided for Levels Primary - Level 2. Please coordinate with your student's peer group or call the Preparatory Dance cell phone at 336-486-0354 for assistance if you are running late; we want to ensure no student is waiting unattended.

PERFORMANCE/SCREENING VENUES

VISITOR PARKING

Special parking is designated for performances and events. Refer to the performance detail on www.uncsa.edu/performances for parking directions.



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|---|---|--|---|
| <p>1 WELCOME CENTER
Admissions
Financial Aid
Registrar
Student Accounts</p> <p>2 ARTIST VILLAGE</p> <p>3 FITNESS CENTER</p> <p>4 NEW DIGITAL MEDIA</p> <p>5 BUCK BUILDING</p> <p>6 ACE EXHIBITION COMPLEX
Main Theatre
Gold Theatre
Babcock Theatre
BB&T Lobby</p> <p>7 SCHOOL OF FILMMAKING STUDIO VILLAGE
Sound Stages</p> <p>8 MOVING IMAGE ARCHIVES</p> <p>9 FILM SCORING STAGE</p> <p>10 ALEX EWING PERFORMANCE PLACE
Freedman Theatre
Catawba Theatre
Patrons Theatre
Cobb Rehearsal Studio</p> | <p>11 COSTUME, WIG AND MAKEUP DESIGN STUDIOS</p> <p>12 PEARCE BUILDING</p> <p>13 SCHOOL OF DESIGN AND PRODUCTION</p> <p>14 ADMINISTRATION AND ANNEX
Financial Services
Human Resources
Information Technologies
Strategic Communications</p> <p>15 DESIGN & PRODUCTION PROP STORAGE</p> <p>16 STAGE AUTOMATION SHOP</p> <p>17 FACILITIES MANAGEMENT</p> <p>18 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</p> <p>19 ANIMATRONICS</p> <p>20 FILM PROP STORAGE</p> <p>21 DUNIGAN SCULPTURE STUDIO</p> <p>22 LIBRARY & LEARNING COMMONS</p> <p>23 SCHOOL OF MUSIC COMPLEX
Watson Hall
Yekovich Conference Room</p> | <p>24 HIGH SCHOOL RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX
Moore Hall
Connector
Sanford Hall</p> <p>25 DANCE COSTUME SHOP</p> <p>26 AGNES DE MILLE THEATRE</p> <p>27 WORKPLACE
School of Dance
School of Drama
Visual Arts Program</p> <p>28 SEMANS ARTS AND ADMINISTRATION BUILDING (SAAB)
Chancellor & Administration offices
Recording Studio
Event Space</p> <p>29 DRAMA GYM</p> <p>30 CAMPUS POLICE</p> <p>31 GRAY BUILDING
Crawford Hall (2nd floor)
Hood Recital Hall (2nd floor)
High School Academics
Studio A</p> | <p>32 HANES STUDENT COMMONS
Eisenberg Social Hall
Dining Hall
Pickle Jar
P.O.D. Market
Wellness Center
Mail Center
Student Affairs Offices</p> <p>33 DANIELS PLAZA</p> <p>34 A-F RESIDENCE HALLS</p> <p>35 THOMAS S. KENAN INSTITUTE FOR THE ARTS</p> <p>36 DIVISION OF LIBERAL ARTS</p> <p>37 SUMMER & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS</p> <p>38 WORKPLACE WEST CLASSROOM BUILDING V</p> <p>39 WORKPLACE WEST CLASSROOM BUILDING III</p> <p>40 FOUNDATION OFFICE</p> <p>41 ADVANCEMENT OFFICE</p> <p>42 CENTRAL STORAGE FACILITY</p> <p>43 CENTER STAGE APARTMENTS</p> <p>44 To STEVENS CENTER
400 W. Fourth St.</p> |
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POLICIES

General and Use of Space

- The UNCSCA School of Dance is a high-traffic facility with state-of-the-art dance studios. Please help take care of the space so all students can benefit.
- Hanging on barres, playing the pianos, running in the hallways, and excessive noise are not permitted.
- Please use the locker room beside Studio 612 for changing clothes. Restrooms are only to be utilized for using the bathroom when at all possible.
- Siblings and friends of students in the Preparatory Dance program must be supervised at all times. Only dancers in the program are permitted in the dance studios.
- Due to the specialized flooring, food, drinks, and street shoes are not allowed in the dance studios. Only water can be brought into the studio.
- Please ensure your family picks up after themselves utilizing the trash receptacles throughout the building.
- **Cell Phones are not permitted by Preparatory Dance students while on campus.** Students are to keep the phone off or on silent mode in their dance bag at all times. Students that are not in compliance will be asked to give the phone to an adult for the duration of their class or rehearsal time.
- Soliciting or outside instruction is strictly prohibited.

Bullying

Bullying and Cyberbullying is the engagement of repeated or aggressive behaviors meant to intimidate, harm, or control another person physically, mentally, or emotionally. Examples include, but are not limited to, teasing, playing pranks/tricks, spreading rumors, and intentionally embarrassing or frightening another individual. Please report any bullying or potential circumstances of bullying to the Program Director immediately. Bullying may result in dismissal from the program.

Attendance and Tardiness

All classes begin on time. If a student is more than 15 minutes late, they will be asked to observe the class due to the risk of injury. Absences are to be communicated in advance when possible. Excused absences include: illness, death of a loved one, medical and dental care, religious holiday/event, mandatory school events and performances, and educational opportunities. There is no substitution for class time. Students with excessive absences will not progress through the program and may not be able to perform due to inadequate preparation at the discretion of the faculty.

Please email prepdance@uncsa.edu or text to communicate any late arrivals and excused or unexcused absences. Faculty will be notified.

Inclement Weather Policy

Cancellations of Preparatory Dance classes for inclement weather are influenced by several factors, including UNCSA campus or hosting organization closures and conditions on the ground. We will confirm closings by email by 12:00pm on the given day. UNCSA Preparatory Dance reserves the right to hold classes or rehearsals when other schools or businesses are closed for inclement weather. Attendance at regularly scheduled classes will be at the discretion of the parent or guardian in the event of a WSFCS district full-day closure. Any absences will be considered excused.

Performance Policy

Students that miss more than three rehearsals in a performance rehearsal period, may not be able to participate at the discretion of the faculty. Any student that is not participating fully in classes, cannot participate in rehearsals or performances. Technique class comes first in dancer training. Students that miss a stage rehearsal will not be able to perform in the production due to the need for all children to be adjusted to the stage.

Social Media Policy

Use of social media must be an extension of the Preparatory Dance Program's expectation that every dancer and family member respect the dignity of others and the Program. To support the constructive and positive learning environment the Program has created, comments or posts about students, the Program, or others that may be obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory, or hateful may lead to immediate dismissal from the Program.

The Program and UNCSA have permission to take and publish images and video of the dancers and instructors, but that permission does not extend to others. You can post pictures of your dancer, but because of the concern for the privacy rights of the participants, images and photographs on personal social media sites must not include other dancers or instructors in the program.

Teaching methods and choreography are intellectual property protected by law. No video containing studio classwork or choreography may be posted on any social media site other than those controlled by the Program and UNCSA. Photography, videography, and livestreaming are not permitted at performances.

Manual, Hands-On Instruction

In ballet training, manual hands-on instruction is a helpful teaching tool. Faculty may use light, appropriate touch to guide a dancer's body alignment and placement. This enables immediate, specific feedback that enhances learning and supports the development of safe and correct technique. All UNCSA faculty are trained in appropriate touch and consent practices. Dancers and families are encouraged to communicate their preferences at any time to ensure a respectful and supportive environment.

Communication with Faculty

- All communication with faculty must go through the Program Director or Administrator.
- Faculty are not to be called, emailed, and/or texted. Faculty are part-time employees not compensated outside of class time. Please do not discuss student progress and concerns in the hallway. All families are advised to go through the Program Director or Administrator to schedule a meeting with your child's instructor.
- Concerns and questions for faculty are to be in a scheduled meeting so the faculty team can provide an appropriate response with the time and consideration each student deserves.

Communication Involving Other Students

Communication either in writing or in conversation that compares your dancer's abilities to other dancers in the program is inconsistent with the values of the Preparatory Dance Program. Email conversation or in-person conversation that does not focus on your dancer's unique skills, progression, and needs is discouraged and will not be permitted.

Private Instruction

The class schedule is designed to be age and skill level appropriate. Due to the rigor of the program, students receive the instructional time needed to achieve the curriculum for their level of study. If a student is attending the full schedule of classes and performances, they are receiving an amount of instructional time safe for their body. Private instruction is not encouraged, and we typically do not have the physical space for additional classes. Private instruction may be recommended if a student is recovering from an illness or injury, has a specific technical concern, is falling behind in their comprehension of the curriculum, or needs assistance preparing for an outside dance performance / event. All private instruction requests will be guided through the Program Director and Administrator by completing this [form](#). Please note: Students in the Preparatory Dance Program are not permitted to do competitions or outside performances representing Preparatory Dance.

Extracurricular Activities

Preparatory Dance does not restrict students from participating in extracurricular activities that do not conflict with their dance classes and rehearsals. Students should request permission if they wish to be excused from classes or required rehearsals to participate in, or audition for, activities that may take them away from their classes, such as Community Theatre and/or other non-school related activities.

School-related activities include: required school plays, concerts, showings, field trips, etc. for which a student is receiving a grade. Often make-up classes with an equivalent or lower level will be recommended.

Injuries and Recovery

Injuries are a natural part of any physical activity. If a student has pain or needs to sit down due to injury for more than three classes, we recommend a diagnosis by a medical professional. Students that are injured should observe, take notes, and follow all guidance from their medical professional. Dancers must submit a doctor's note with the diagnosis and activity recommendations to the Program Director or Administrator to ensure the faculty team is made aware. Families that do not disclose an injury will not be permitted to stay in the program. Clearance from a doctor does not guarantee that the student will participate fully in class. The instructor may recommend additional strengthening or ramping back up at a lower level for the dancer's safety. The Preparatory Dance Director and faculty team will help the dancer work safely to ensure that the student comes back efficiently and reserves all rights to instruct a dancer to stop if they feel that the movements that they are doing are not safe for them.

Progression to Pointe Work

Beginning in Level 3 of the ABT Curriculum, students are introduced to dancing on pointe. Pointe work requires a high level of technique as well as body strength and flexibility. Dancers in Level 2 and 3A may begin pre-pointe classes to prepare their bodies for pointe. All dancers must successfully pass a physical assessment to progress to pointe. The assessment details and rubric are available to all families for review at this [link](#).

School of Dance Nutcracker

Each school year, students in Level 4 (very occasionally Level 3) registered in Fall Performance Ensemble consider auditioning for the role of Party Child in the UNCSCA School of Dance *Nutcracker* with the high school and college conservatory students. It is a wonderful source of inspiration to be in a professionally-oriented production with live orchestra. Students will audition with the School of Dance faculty for the role, and generally dancers 5'3" and under are considered for casting. Families will need to commute to Greensboro to the Tanger Center for Production week and all performances.

Illness

Dancers are not to come to Preparatory Dance if they are unwell. A student that becomes ill at Preparatory Dance, must be picked up to go home.

When to stay home: Currently has a fever over 99 degrees or has had a fever in the last 24 hours, taking fever reducing medication, cough, wheezing, runny nose, chills, vomiting/diarrhea, or change in eye color/eye discharge. If a student is diagnosed with Covid-19, please inform the Program Director and quarantine following these [CDC guidelines for respiratory viruses](#). Please ensure your student utilizes a high-quality mask if they are recovering from or have mild fever-free symptoms of a communicable illness.

OPEN-DOOR POLICY: WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

General Assistance: Registration, Payment, Late / Absent, Drop-Off / Pick-Up Support

Ms. Vanessa Vargas, Preparatory Dance Administrator

September – June: 2 pm - 6 pm Daily

prepdance@uncsa.edu

Preparatory Dance Cell Phone (text / call): 336-486-0354

Artistic Concerns and Management: Program Structure, Curriculum, Instruction, Faculty Concerns, Classroom Experience, Feedback and Ideas

Ms. Monica Stephenson, Director of Preparatory Dance

Full – time

Calendar: [Meeting Request Link](#)

stephensonm@uncsa.edu

Office Phone: 336-734-2939

Communication Guidelines for Preparatory Dance

- **Informal and direct communication is strongly preferred.** Please bring your concern forward with mutual care and respect. Ms. Stephenson, Program Director, has an open-door policy and appreciates the opportunity to address your concern no matter how small or big. If further resolution is needed beyond the programmatic level, we will request a meeting with Dean Endalyn Taylor Outlaw for her experience, perspective, and assistance in the matter. Resolution will include collaboration and conversation amongst relevant parties to ensure we address the matter at its source and have an opportunity for mutual learning.
- Feedback is invited and is a necessary part of the art form. As artists and educators, we appreciate feedback and work hard to model that important skill for our dancers and families.
- Keep in mind, dance education especially at higher levels is truly a journey—there are going to be periods of joy, accomplishment, and progress as well as moments of disappointment, regression, comparison, competition, jealousy, plateau, rejection, illness, injury, self-doubt, and failure. Happiness is not the only emotion of the dance journey and that builds resilience, perseverance, and coping skills for life. These emotions tend to show up at different times of adolescence and stages of dance talent development. These [resources](#), might help with what to expect and the role of the parent, teacher, and student at each stage of talent development. ***Our commitment is for your child to always be treated well and with love, care, and respect and to have support through each stage.*** Please let Ms. Stephenson know right away if there is an experience to the contrary so we can promptly address it.
- Please note: A classroom, interpersonal, or instructional concern can be resolved promptly, but something like changing the schedule or added staffing may not be feasible until the next school year due to the budget and space implications. We welcome families to suggest options that will suit their family best if immediate, individual schedule accommodations are needed. Thank you for your partnership.

HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All families will need to complete the [handbook acknowledgement form](#) to participate in classes for the 2025 – 26 school year. Please share age-appropriate details with your student. Thank you for your continued trust and partnership in dance education. Please do not hesitate to reach out at any time.

In gratitude and excitement,

Monica Stephenson

Program Director, Preparatory Dance

