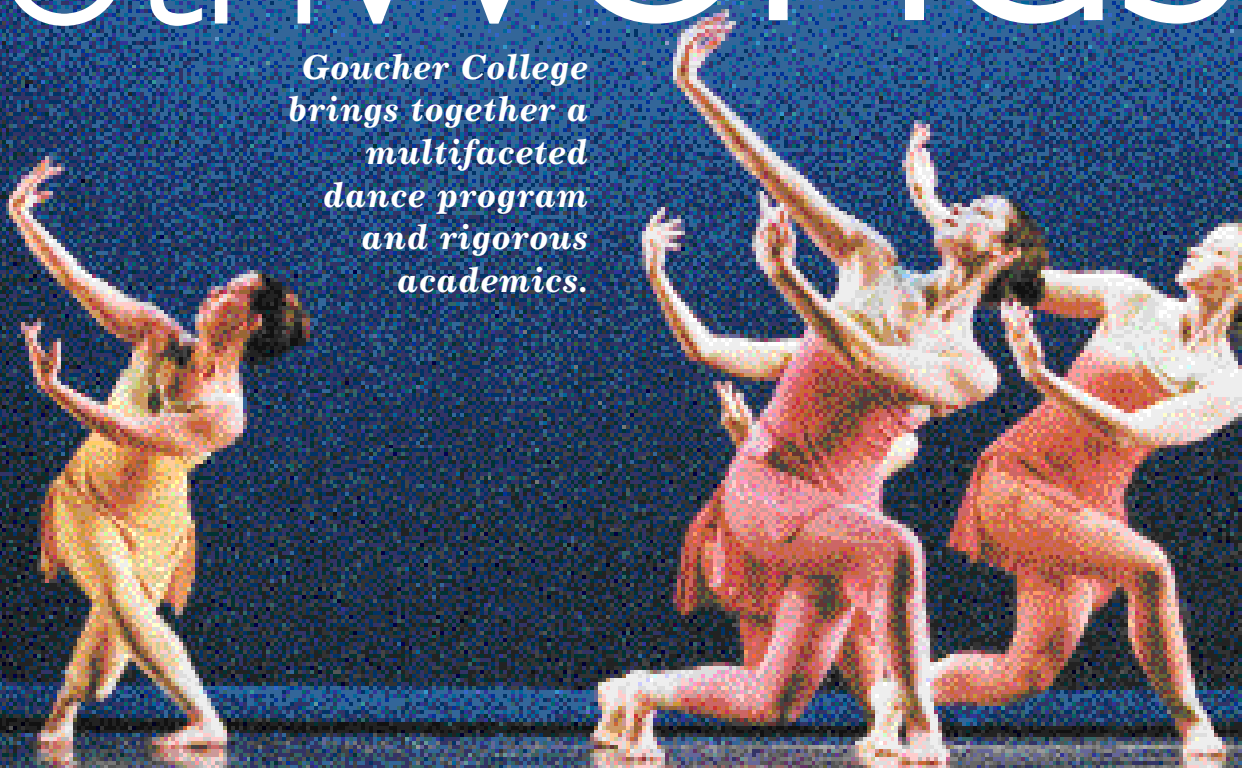


by Elaina Loveland

the best of both Worlds

*Goucher College
brings together a
multifaceted
dance program
and rigorous
academics.*



JASON LEE/COURTESY OF GOUCHER COLLEGE

Goucher students Dionne Figgins, Julia Rosenfeld, Jennifer Egan and Jennifer Ellsworth in José Limón's *Suite* from *A Choreographic Offering*

Choosing a college program is hard enough for dancers, but the decision is even more difficult for students who want to pursue dance and another academic subject with equal emphasis. Goucher College, spread over a 287-acre wooded campus in the Baltimore suburb of Towson, Maryland, provides the best of both worlds for serious dancers with academic interests.

The dance department at Goucher offers preprofessional dance training within the framework of a liberal arts education. Students can participate in all parts of the dance program whether or not they declare a dance major. Those who do declare choose from seven different concentrations, including dance performance and choreography, dance education with or without teacher

certification, dance science, arts administration, dance therapy, dance theater and dance history and criticism. "We are unique in that dancers can still perform whether they major in dance, double-major or major in another subject altogether," says Amanda Thom Woodson, the department chair and an associate professor. "We offer seven levels of technique in both ballet and modern, like many conservatory programs, and students in these classes are a mix of majors and nonmajors."

Steps In Time

The dance tradition at Goucher College is longstanding: The college, which was a woman's college until the mid-1980s, has had dance as part of its curriculum since 1916. Professor Chrystelle Trump Bond headed the development of the dance program in the 1960s. "Dance technique

has been offered at Goucher as a physical education course since the early days of the college's history," she says. "When students realized that they were doing as much work in dance classes as in their other classes, they rallied for them to be offered for academic credit. The first dance history course was offered for credit in 1965, and from there the program grew exponentially."

Goucher began awarding a degree in dance in 1976 as part of the Department of English and Dramatic Arts. In 1981, it became an independent department and has been growing ever since. Today there are approximately 36 dance majors and 40 freshman students intending to declare a dance major by their sophomore year. Because of the open-door philosophy, one-third of the school's 1,200 students participates in dance classes. It is one of the college's largest departments.

In The Spotlight

Performing opportunities abound at Goucher. The department has two dance concerts each year in Kraushaar Auditorium, the college's 1,000-seat theater. Two guest artists specializing in ballet and two in modern dance visit the department every year and often create choreography on Goucher students. Their ranks have included world-renowned dancers and choreographers such as Christopher d'Amboise, Violette Verdy, Jean-Pierre Bonnefoux, Ib Andersen and John Clifford in ballet and Mark Dendy, Carolyn Dorfman, Bebe Miller and Doug Varone in modern.

There are numerous other opportunities for students to perform in smaller, more informal dance concerts in the Todd Dance Studio. Depending on a given year's senior class, the department may also have a senior concert. Goucher dancers participate in the American College Dance Festival each year and occasionally perform on tour.

Students can also perform with Goucher's Choreographie Antique, an acclaimed dance history ensemble. The troupe, which has been a highlight of the dance department since its founding in 1988, reconstructs popular dances of the past and performs them in period costume. Choreographie Antique has more than 100 dances spanning more than four centuries in its repertory; its roster includes students, faculty and professionals within the Baltimore community. In addition to dancing in Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, the ensemble has performed with the New York Baroque Dance Company in its Anniversary Baroque Costume Ball in New York City. The dancers have even been featured in movies: Members of Choreographie Antique danced in the 1997 film *Washington Square*, starring Jennifer Jason Leigh and Albert Finney and filmed on location in Baltimore.

In The Classroom

Daily technique classes and rehearsals are held in two large studios. Adjacent is the Sports and Recreation Center, which is outfitted with an indoor pool, weight room, aerobics studio, sauna, racquetball courts and wellness lab. The most advanced classes are demanding. "One of the most striking difference about dance at Goucher compared to other programs [at liberal arts colleges] is that Goucher offers the opportunity to study ballet and modern dance at the highest level of technique," explains Woodson. "Goucher dancers leave with the technical training required to get into dance companies."

In recent years, Goucher has expanded the dance program by establishing a campus Pilates studio. The program is directed by

GOUCHER COLLEGE



Goucher students performing George Balanchine's *Serenade*

Department of Dance
1021 Dulany Valley Road
Baltimore, MD 21204

410-337-6390; www.goucher.edu/dance

Degrees Offered: BA in Dance with concentrations in choreography and performance, history and criticism, dance therapy, arts administration, dance science, dance education, dance education with secondary certification, dance and theater; dance minor

Faculty: Amanda Thom Woodson, associate professor and department chair; Chrystelle Trump Bond, professor; Elizabeth Lowe Ahearn, assistant professor and director of the Pilates studio; Juliet Forrest; Jayme Klinger Host; Laura Gurdus Dolid; Katherine S. Ferguson; Jerome Herskovitz; Todd Mion; Glenna Blessing; Linda McDevitt; Jane Murray; Fleur Colimore; Diana Brooks; Linda Rinier; Lester Holmes

Elizabeth Lowe Ahearn. "Pilates is offered to all students at Goucher, but three sections are specifically for dancers," says Ahearn, who was certified as an Authentic Pilates instructor by The Pilates Studio in NYC in 1995. Goucher's Pilates studio has one full-time instructor and five part-time instructors. Because of their teachers' experience, students can take courses toward the Authentic Pilates certification. "We have even had dancers become certified to teach Pilates while they were still Goucher students," notes Ahearn.

Another attractive feature of the department is its multiple dance tracks. One of the most innovative is the dance science concentration, which students select if they have a strong desire to start a career in a health profession. To supplement the dance science concentration, the department has hosted an annual Dance Science Symposium for the past 11 years. The symposium provides a forum for health and dance professionals to discuss topics that are relevant to dancers, instructors, physical therapists and physicians.

Beyond Studio Walls

As part of Goucher's general education

requirements for graduation, all students must participate in an off-campus experience, either an internship or study abroad. Dancers have the option of participating in a study-abroad program at Middlesex University in England or doing an internship to explore future career options. Students have interned at such notable organizations as Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, Dance Theatre of Harlem, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, David Parsons Company, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, American Dance Festival and the Dance Notation Bureau.

After graduation, Goucher alumni have become performers, dance teachers in public schools and private studios, instructors at higher education institutions, dance critics, arts administrators, dance therapists, physical therapists and Pilates instructors. Other graduates have pursued nonrelated careers in fields such as medicine, law and journalism. Dance education majors have been particularly successful in obtaining employment as dance teachers in public schools. "Goucher is only one of two colleges in Maryland that offers K-12 certification in dance. School administrators call me up every year and ask who we are graduating," says Woodson, who teaches dance education courses, Labanotation and all levels of modern technique.

An inevitable factor in pursuing higher education is tuition and, as a private institution, Goucher recognizes that cost plays a factor in students' decisions. The college provides merit awards that range from \$5,000 one-year awards to renewable four-year full scholarships covering tuition, room and board. Goucher also offers Rosenberg Scholarships in the Arts, while the dance department grants its own awards, including the Dance Gala Scholarship, the Friends of Goucher Dance Scholarship and the Schon Scholarship in Dance Science.

According to Woodson, the Goucher dance department is "dedicated to a liberal arts education that prepares students both physically and intellectually for leadership in the multifaceted world of dance and related disciplines." Any dancer can prosper at Goucher—those who want a professional career, those who want to combine dance and another academic discipline in their collegiate studies and those who want to keep dancing and performing while pursuing a different major. "Many Goucher dancers love more than just dance," says Ahearn, "and a liberal arts environment is the place to pursue several loves." **DT**

Elaina Loveland is an editor, freelance writer and dance teacher in Alexandria, VA.