

CUL·TI·VATE

A Trainee Program

TU Dance



***CUL·TI·VATE:** curated encounters (in and outside the dance studio) designed to support and strengthen the total dance artist, advancing their physical, emotional, and cognitive growth, agility, and acumen. Rooted in TU Dance's vision of transformational communities, CUL·TI·VATE nurtures artistic excellence and the development of intellectual curiosities and moral character, finely tuned to ignite flourishing communities committed to shared humanity.*

Dr. Carol Marie Webster, PhD

Inspired by the next generation of dance artists, CUL·TI·VATE is a program designed as a bridge for dancers with advanced training between their educational perspective and envisioning themselves in the professional field. Through classes, workshops, choreographic processes, mentorship, community engagement, teaching, performance and more, dancers will connect and share experiences as a collective as well as expressing and gaining momentum towards their individual interests and goals beyond their time in the program. CUL·TI·VATE will embrace and support each dancer while fostering their unique artistic path centered in TU Dance's values of *excellence, belonging, creativity and transformation*.

Toni Pierce-Sands, TU Dance Founder & Artistic Director
Laurel Keen, TU Dance Artistic Associate



CUL·TI·VATE Foundations

Classes/Training: Continue to build on and strengthen foundations in technical practices to support the versatile dance artist of today. We believe in a multifaceted approach as well as the importance of rigor and preparing young dancers for a broad range of artistic opportunities.



Abdo Sayegh-Rodriguez
Ballet and GYROKINESIS®

Leila Awadahallah
Body Watani

Laurel Keen
Ballet

Hassan Ingrahm
Ballet

Toni Pierce-Sands
Horton-Based Modern

Engaging with Current Artists in the Dance Field: Supporting connections with current dance artists, choreographers and scholars in the field on a local, national and international level with the goal of expanding future professional opportunities beyond one's time in the CULTIVATE program. These connections will be achieved through multiple TU Dance productions throughout the year as well as partnerships with local dance presenters and venues hosting national and international artists.



Career-Oriented Workshops: Tools to equip the young professional dancer of today and provide a space to foster individual artistic interests and agency to be a part of the landscape of change within the future dance.



(photo from workshop with A.I.M. by Kyle Abraham dancers Tamisha Guy and Catherine Kirk in partnership with Northrop, University of Minnesota)

Mentoring (Spring): With the goal to further support each individual artist, dancers will be paired with a mentor with an expertise in their area of interest and work towards co-creating an artist statement to utilize for auditions, workshops, etc. *(Some mentoring hours may fall outside of the regularly scheduled program hours)*



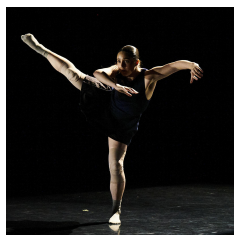
2022-2023 Mentors *(left to right):*

- [Rachael McLaren](#); Former principal with Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater
- [Gregory Dolbashian](#); Founder & Director of DASH Ensemble and DASH Academy
- [Shawn Judge](#); Renowned Twin Cities Actor, Founder and President of The Speaker's Edge
- [Jessica Tong](#); Former dancer and Associate Artistic Director with Hubbard Street Dance Chicago and Rehearsal Director with A.I.M. by Kyle Abraham
- [Catherine Kirk](#); Dancer/Collaborator, Marketing & Education Associate with Abraham in Motion by Kyle Abraham

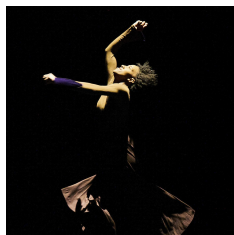
Choreographic Processes: The opportunity to be immersed in artistic processes with renowned choreographers, professional dancers as well as students from the The School at TU Dance Center in the creation of new work.



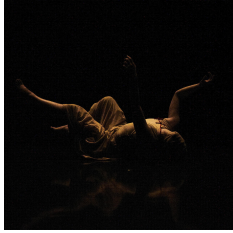
Self-Choreographed Solos: Each dancer will have the opportunity to create, perform and film their own solo with guidance from TU Dance's artistic team as well as their individual mentor. *Read more from the 2022-2023 CULTIVATE trainees below.*



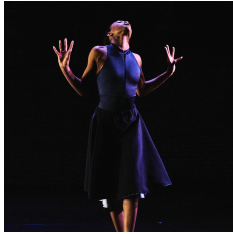
Laren Chang: *"Coming into CULTIVATE I had high expectations regarding the quality of training, level of professionalism and the amount of rigorous choreographic process we would be involved in. All of these expectations were met, but what has shifted is how I imagined myself navigating these expectations as an individual and collective. I have learned that there are different ways to be just as rigorous, just as intentional, and productive without wearing my body down to the bone. To keep fueling my love for this craft and the other artists in the room, I must do this career in a sustainable fashion."*



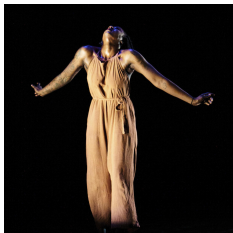
Suzette Gilreath: *"For me what has shifted in the last two months is my consciousness of what is possible from within and outwardly. As I have truly begun to release control of what I believe should be and create space for the abundance in me, around me, and through me. TU Dance has been a great environment for me to experience, all of me and the grace of the holy one."*



Samantha Meryhew: *"CULTIVATE for me has been a great place to continue challenging myself, as an artist and as a person, to be vulnerable in my work. I have always felt I needed to separate myself from my dance: Do the work and give what the choreographer wants. Of course, the work still is there, but allowing myself to be seen is something that I have been challenging myself to continue working on."*



Sa'Nah Britt: *"I'm grateful and humbled to be a part of CULTIVATE, A Trainee program which has been a blessing to me in so many ways. Since being in the program, I'm learning to take more ownership for my well-being by advocating more for myself and expressing what I need. I'm also finding new ways to stay motivated - even on my hardest days. This program has provided an opportunity for me to step into a new level of leadership and continues to stretch and challenge me in different ways. This has recentered my focus making room for more progress and growth to take place. A bonus of the program includes friendships that I've developed with fellow artists and working with different choreographers making each day even more fulfilling!"*



Gabbrielle Abram: *"CULTIVATE allowed me to focus on my dance and my artistry 75% of the time. Not only was I able to train within a consistent schedule but I was able to build and grow within a community I'm not often with, meet new faces and build new connections that will last beyond my time within the program."*

Teaching: Each dancer will gain experience assisting with classes at The School at TU Dance Center. For those that feel particularly drawn to teaching, pedagogy and/or choreography, further opportunities within the school may also be discussed.



Community Engagement: Through TU Dance's continued commitment to staying involved with the community and sharing the *transformational power of dance*, there will be opportunities to engage with our partner schools as well as other organizations within the Twin Cities.



Performances: There will be 2-3 performance opportunities throughout the year.



- **Winter Showcase:**
 - December 8-10, 2023
 - Alongside students from The School at TU Dance Center
- **THREAT**
 - April 26 & 27, 2024
 - Evening length work featuring choreography by Yusha-Marie Sorzano
 - All trainees will attend the *THREAT* audition (date TBD)
 - All trainees will be involved in the choreographic process.
 - Trainees might be selected by the choreographer in collaboration with TU Dance artistic director to perform in *THREAT*
- **Spring Showcase:**
 - May 17-19, 2024
 - Alongside students from The School at TU Dance Center

CUL·TI·VATE Details

- Age Range: 18-24
- Audition Requirements
 - Strongly encouraged to attend the TU Dance Summer Intensive July 24-August 12, 2023. Please register here: <https://www.tudance.org/summer/> (scholarships available)
 - If you are not able to attend the Summer Intensive please email the following to laurel.keen@tudance.org and maxine.yamazaki@tudance.org by August 14, 2023.
 - Resume and Cover Letter expressing your interest and goals for participating in CUL·TI·VATE.
 - Performance Reel (3 minutes max and may include studio or performance footage which clearly shows the individual instead of group work)
 - An in-person meeting (or virtual for those that are not local) may be scheduled as part of the audition process.
 - Dancers will receive notification of their acceptance into the CUL·TI·VATE program by August 28, 2023.
- Yearly Schedule
 - CUL·TI·VATE is a one-year program with an option to return for a second year
 - Fall 2023:
 - September 25 - December 10
 - 10-week Fall session
 - Week off: November 20-24
 - Spring 2024
 - January 22-26, February 22-April 27 and May 8-19
 - 12-week Spring session
- Daily Schedule
 - Monday- Friday 9:30am-4:15pm
 - The schedule may include additional hours (evenings and/or Saturdays). Advanced notice will be provided if the schedule changes.
 - Tech Week hours may differ from the daily schedule noted above, and will be provided approximately one month in advance. Full availability is required during tech week.
- Compensation
 - \$450/week

- Trainees will be compensated as employees
- Location
 - All classes and workshops will take place at TU Dance Center or places determined by TU Dance.
 - Community engagement and performances may take place off-site
- Housing and travel are not provided

CUL·TI·VATE Interest and Questions: please email maxine.yamazaki@tudance.org

Photo Credits:

Opening Photos by Canaan Mattson

Toni Pierce-Sands by Edward Block III

Laurel Keen by Mark Buenaflor

Classes/Training: *Abdo Sayegh-Rodriguez* by Eric Saulitis; *Leila Awadahallah* by Cannan Mattson; *Laurel Keen* by Marty Sohl; *Hassan Ingrahm* by Canaan Mattson; *Toni Pierce-Sands* by Edward Block III

Engaging with Dance Artists: Gregory Dolbashian by Mike Esperanza; Yusha-Marie Sorzano by Eric Politzer; Marcus Jarrell Willis by Stéphane Chouan

Career Oriented Workshops by Daonna Lewis; AIM (@AIMbyKyleAbraham) featuring Tamisha Guy and Catherine Kirk

Mentoring: *Rachael McLaren* by Andrew Eccles; *Gregory Dolbashian* by Mike Esperanza; *Shawn Judge* by Patrick Nau; *Jessica Tong* by Todd Rosenberg; *Catherine Kirk* by Carrie Schneider

Choreographic Process by Canaan Mattson

Self-Choreographed Solos by Canaan Mattson

Teaching by Laura Kane Scher Photography

Community Engagement: Courtesy of TU Dance

Performance by Canaan Mattson