

Dance Team

Not often does dance make the list of official college-sanctioned sports, but that's the case at St. Ambrose University. With scholarship opportunities available to interested and experienced dancers, SAU Dance Coach Lance Corber has been able to attract the best talent around.

"At SAU, dancers are considered student athletes," Corber says. "I have a budget assigned to the team, so the dancers do not have to provide out of their own pocket for uniforms or shoes."

The program began as an official sport in 2001. Corber has directed the program since 2003, and it continues to grow under his leadership.

For the first time, SAU Dance has a competition squad. Established in Fall 2007, dancers competed in the Iowa State College Competition and won first place in Division AA Jazz. "We will continue to compete and explore more opportunities in the Midwest region for the 2008–09 season. Our ultimate goal is to compete nationally, but strategic steps will be taken to get there." Corber says.

Contact the coach

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Performances

The SAU Dance Team performs routines in traditional jazz, ballet, hip-hop, pom, kick, tap, lyrical, contemporary, and ballroom.

SAU dancers perform at approximately 15–20 events throughout the season. They provide half-time entertainment at Fighting Bees home football and basketball games. The team also has the privilege of performing on the main stage at the Quad City Arts Festival of Trees in late fall. Each season is brought to a close with the two-hour Spring show, held in Allaert Auditorium of the Galvin Fine Arts Center on campus.

"The spring show is a showcase of the season's routines, as well as full production pieces that display the various talent of the dancers," Corber says. "Last year we had record attendance and the show was very well received."

Recruitment

Spots on the SAU Dance Team roster are hard won, Corber says. "Always push for the next level," he says. "Explore something you're not familiar with and be open to new possibilities. Don't think you know everything. There's always more to learn."

SAU Dance Team members have had dance experience in studios and in high school, allowing practices to be used for sharpening routines rather than developing dance skills. Dancers generally practice two hours, three nights a week.

Corber lays out three priorities for his dancers: family first, school second, and dance third. These advantages, combined with the strong academic programs, make St. Ambrose a great place for dancers. "It's an incredible opportunity for those who have danced their whole lives," he says.

The coaching staff

Coach Lance Corber has compiled over 25 years of dance experience including jazz, funk, hip-hop, tap, ballet, and ballroom. He has spent 20 years teaching dance at multiple studios in the Quad Cities area.

Corber is entering his sixth season as head coach and continues to mold and shape the program. He constantly strives to take the program to the next level, adding more performances and more styles of choreographed dance.

Asst. Coach Amy Anderson is a graduate of Hope College with an emphasis on dance performance and choreography. Amy brings an extensive background of formal dance training and performance to SAU, including ballet, pointe, modern and jazz. She is currently a principal dancer and mentor within River Point Ballet, and an instructor at the Illinois Ballet Theater.

Asst. Coach Jade Wubben '08 is a graduate of St. Ambrose University and was a member of the SAU Dance team for 4 years. Jade brings an immense amount of positive energy to the program, motivating the dancers to strive for the next level. She has choreographed material for the Creative Christmas event held each year at the i Wireless Center, formerly The Mark of the Quad Cities.

Community service

Typically, the dance team will participate in four to five community service projects throughout the year. Projects include a gift-giving program with SAU's neighborhood schools and a book collection for the "Reading for Success" program. In recent past, the dance team has hosted a children's clinic, where members develop a routine and perform with the kids at a sporting event.

Facilities

St. Ambrose University has a dedicated dance room on campus that serves exclusively as the dance practice facility. The dance room is equipped with wood floors and full-length mirrors. The Dance Team performs on stage and on the basketball court in Lee Lohman Arena. During football season, the team performs at Brady Street Stadium, an outdoor Astroturf field near campus.

Financial aid

St. Ambrose dance has the unique circumstance of being recognized as an official athletic program. With that comes the ability to grant scholarship packages to particularly talented dancers. These are partial scholarships not tied to academics and financial need.