

FIAT LUX

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE
MAY 1993

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First dance Ph.D. in U.S. and only creative writing department in UC approved for UCR

UCR became the first campus in the nation to establish a doctoral program in Dance History and Theory this past quarter and also became the first in the UC system to establish a Department of Creative Writing.

The UC Board of Regents also approved full departmental status for Ethnic Studies, Religious Studies, and Women's Studies.

Ph.D. in Dance

"It is thrilling that UCR is the one to introduce the Ph.D. in Dance History," said Susan Foster, Chair of the UCR Department of Dance. "It reveals anew that UCR is truly on the cutting edge of research in the arts in general and dance in particular. We have a visionary commitment to work in the humanities.

"Not only does it establish UC Riverside as an international center for research on dance, it affirms the importance of dance as an object of

study in the humanities and social sciences," she said.

The new Ph.D. is an extension of UCR's highly successful Inter-campus Master of Arts degree in Dance History, established by Christena Schlundt in 1982 as the first of its kind in the nation. UCR's dance program unites the study of performance and choreography with the study of how dance has influenced human culture worldwide.

Four new departments

The new departmental status has important ramifications for faculty morale and for attracting top flight faculty and students, said Carole Shammass, Chair of Women's Studies.

"With a faculty made up almost entirely of published writers, our new status signals to incoming students and guidance counselors that UCR should be the preferred choice for students who are seri-

ously interested in the writing of fiction and poetry," said Steve Minot, Chair of Creative Writing.

"My heart just soars," said Clifford Trafzer, Chair of Ethnic Studies. "This is a kind of commitment I have not seen at other institutions. It may be just a change in wording, but words are important. They have power. The word 'department' carries with it elevation of status, and that is particularly beneficial in an area that approaches academic study in nontraditional ways," he said.

While the elevated status does not change operations, hiring standards, or curricular direction, the action eliminates any misperception that the areas of study are provisional, experimental, or temporary in nature, said June O'Connor, Chair of Religious Studies. "We have been a department in reality if not name, so it is nice to catch up with reality," she said.