

Kelly Ferris Lester, Ed.D., M.F.A.

EDUCATION

Doctor of Education, Higher Education Administration

The University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS | August 2022

Dissertation: *Faculty Leadership Institute: A Case Study in Leadership Development in Higher Education* [10.13140/RG.2.2.16501.55526](#)

Master of Fine Arts, Dance Performance and Choreography

State University of New York, College at Brockport, NY | May 2007

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Theatre with concentration in dance

University of Memphis, TN | May 2000

CERTIFICATIONS

Data Equity Fellow | Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities | 2022

Emerging Leaders Program | American Association of State Colleges and Universities | 2022

Advanced Certificate in Effective College Instruction | Association of College and University Educators (ACUE), endorsed by American Council on Education. | 2021

Inclusive Teaching for Equitable Learning | Association of College and University Educators (ACUE); microcredential | 2021

RECENT EXPERIENCE

CURRENT INSTITUTION

The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) is an R1 institution and one of only 43 institutions accredited in all four areas of the arts. Additionally holds the Carnegie Community Engaged designation. The institution hosts four academic colleges, a Graduate School, and Honors College. Enrollment numbers consistently represent 14,000+ students. USM prioritizes student success, excellence in teaching, research, and creative activities, community partnerships, and a culture of inclusion. Student demographics mimic the state with 30% Black, 60% White, and less than 4% Asian American, Mixed Race, and Native American students. More than half the student body as Pell-grant eligible and approximately 30% first-generation students.

Lester's tenure at USM includes promotion to full Professor (2019) and appointment as the Associate Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning (2022), Associate Provost for Faculty Success, and founding director for the Center for Faculty Development (2018). With a grounding in teaching and leadership development, Lester's work includes student success and faculty success initiatives. Lester's initiatives reach across the

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institution, and include collaborations with shared governance bodies, student affairs, deans, and school directors, and incorporation of several key policies related to teaching and learning, academic integrity, and hiring practices.

KEY SKILLS AND CHARACTERISTICS

- Management of budgets across multiple units
- Strong organizational, interpersonal communication, and team performance skills.
- Facilitation of conflict management, including focusing on outcomes to resolve issues and recommend workable solutions.
- Incorporation of goal setting and critical feedback for faculty and staff
- Skilled in developing a shared vision, strategic plans, and implementation plans
- Collaboration across disciplines and with shared governance bodies
- Facilitation curriculum mapping, teaching development, and leadership development
- Ability to leverage professional expertise and University knowledge and higher education trends to assess areas of opportunity, identify solutions and effectively execute the plan.
- Skilled in assessment and program review
- Skilled in change management

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

POSITIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Associate Provost for Faculty Success | July 2024-present

**Due to restructuring in the Office of the Provost, title was updated from previous title of AVP of Teaching and Learning and updated distribution of duties and direct reports.*

As a member of the leadership team in the Office of the Provost, Lester's responsibilities include providing strategic leadership for all matters related to faculty affairs and working closely with deans, school directors, faculty, and other internal and external stakeholders to ensure faculty members have the resources, support, and opportunities they need to excel in their teaching, research, and service. Additional responsibilities include coordination of faculty human resources, centralized onboarding, and orientation services for new full-time and adjunct faculty.

- Area Supervision Center for Faculty Development, Learning Assistants Program, Center for Community Engagement, Academic Integrity Director, Academic Affairs Web Designer
- Faculty affairs oversight faculty searches, promotion and tenure, faculty awards, New Faculty Orientation, faculty development, faculty retention, faculty handbook, community engagement.

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- Policy oversight Student Academic Integrity, Grade Appeal, Evaluation of Teaching, Online Teaching and Learning
- Key initiatives Provost Faculty Fellows program, Workload policy revision (in process), Faculty recruitment and retention, faculty mentorship program (in process), Artificial intelligence and use in classrooms and experiences.

Associate Vice Provost for Teaching and Learning | *August 2022-June 2024*

As a member the leadership team in the Office of the Provost, Lester responsibilities included over cultivating a transformative, innovative environment for effective, research-informed teaching and engaged student learning at the institution and fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration and develops targeted strategies to enhance pedagogical practices, connect faculty, and address areas of challenge in student learning outcomes. This position has primary responsibility for faculty development, oversight of data related to teaching effectiveness and student outcomes, and development of evidence-based initiatives for continuous improvement of teaching and learning efforts.

- Area Supervision Center for Faculty Development, Learning Assistants Program, Center for Community Engagement, Speaking Center, Writing Center, Academic Integrity Director
- Oversight faculty searches, faculty awards, New Faculty Orientation, faculty development, faculty retention, data related to teaching effectiveness and student outcomes, development of evidence-based initiatives for continuous improvement of teaching and learning efforts, student resources and peer-to-peer learning, community engagement
- Policy oversight Student Academic Integrity, Grade Appeal, Online Teaching and Learning, Instructional Policy for University and Holiday Closure
- Key initiatives Charter and chair, Inclusive Teaching Strategic Planning task force (2022-23), Provost's Faculty Fellowship: Recruiting and Retaining Representative and Successful Faculty

Director, Center for Faculty Development | *2018-2022*

- Inaugural Director: CFD established 2016 with Director role named in 2018
- Duties includes strategic planning, budget management, collaborating with institutional units to provide robust support in professional development, overseeing Association of College Educators (ACUE) Faculty Development Institute, creating and facilitating Faculty Leadership Institute, overseeing Academic Integrity Policy and personnel, supervising of Center for Community Engagement, overseeing Faculty First Week (a pre-semester conference for USM), promoting center across campus community, establishing CFD Advisory Board, etc.

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- Key accomplishments ACUE Faculty Development Institute grew from 30 to 125 credentialed educators and from serving 30 faculty per year to 90+, Faculty Leadership Institute as a signature program with 43% growth in applications and 50% acceptance rate, Growth in participation from approximately 350 attendees across workshops in year 1 to over 1200 in year 4, Development of strategic plan 2018 and 2021, Development of cross-campus community partners with quality programming, reliability, and promotion of cohesive support for faculty and staff, Incorporation of career guidance programming and inclusive teaching and learning environments to align with institutional mission, vision, and values.

Professor of Dance | 2008- present

Promotion to Professor 2019 | Tenured and Promotion to Associate Professor 2014 | Assistant Professor 2009-2014 | Visiting Assistant Professor 2008-2009

COURSES TAUGHT

- All levels of Modern technique
- Somatics and Dance
- Dance Appreciation in various modalities
- Composition
- Junior and Senior projects
- Thesis in Dance
- Music Resources for Dance
- Beginning Jazz
- Beginning Ballet
- Honors College Thesis Writing

PREVIOUS POSITIONS

Adjunct Lecturer, SUNY Brockport | Summer 2007-Summer 2008

Course Taught: Introduction to Dance, Movement and Self Awareness

Graduate Teaching Assistant | Spring 2006-Spring 2007

Courses Taught: Introduction to Dance, Movement and Self Awareness, and 20th Century Dance History (assistant)

Adjunct Lecturer, University of Rochester, NY | Spring 2008

Course Taught: Fundamentals of Movement and Contemporary Ballet

Adjunct Instructor, University of Memphis, TN | Fall 2001-Spring 2004

Course Taught: Modern I, Ballet I, Introduction to Dance

Additional responsibilities: Artistic director faculty concerts, advisor

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Instructor, University of Mississippi | Fall 2000-Spring 2001

Courses Taught: Modern I/II, Ballet I, Ballet II, and advisement

SELECTED INITIATIVES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Initiative Lead | Artificial Intelligence-Responsible Use | Institutional Success | 2024

Based on the needs of various stakeholders, the approach to artificial intelligence responsible use is multi-layered. Strategies include establishing artificial intelligence taskforce, ongoing professional development for faculty and students, gaining input from faculty on the why (or why not) artificial intelligence is allowable in courses, and partnering with the Mississippi Artificial Intelligence Network (MAIN).

Initiative Lead | Workload Policy Revision | Faculty Success | 2024

Based on request from Faculty Senate, the University's Faculty Handbook Workload Policy (4.3) and accompanying appendix for workload allocation guidelines is being reviewed for clarity, communication to stakeholders, and consistent implementation across colleges and schools.

Initiative Lead | Seymour's GEC | Student Success | 2023-2024

Based on a Student Government Association recommendation, a website was established to describe the general education requirements and courses.

Collaboration and consultation with Faculty Senate, Undergraduate Council, General Education Curriculum Committee, and Council of Directors. Key partner: Danielle Sypher-Haley, USM web designer.

Initiative Lead | Excellence in Teaching through Inclusion Plan | Faculty and Student Success | 2022-2023

Plan centers teaching excellence at USM by expanding research-grounded professional development programming for faculty and staff to enhance student learning and experiences. The strategic plan will cross-pollinate with efforts already in progress at USM, such as the University Pillars, Mental Health Taskforce, and an in-progress strategic enrollment management plan. Further, the plan emphasizes the disaggregation of data, analysis of equity gaps, and crafting inclusion strategies for student success. Collaboration and consultation with all university governing bodies, faculty, and staff.

Program Designer and Facilitator | Faculty Leadership Institute (FLI) | Faculty Success | 2019-2022

The FLI aims to build an interdisciplinary community that cares about leading and professional development. We invite faculty applicants who are already in leadership positions within the university (programs, schools, committees) or in professional organizations, as well as faculty who are considering taking on leadership positions. FLI faculty fellows will gain skills, knowledge, and resources that are transferable to varied dimensions of their faculty careers, from research productivity to involvement in their

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professional discipline to formal leadership opportunities on campus. Currently a signature program in the Center for Faculty Development.

Initiative Lead | Faculty First Week | Faculty Success | 2019- present

This annual in-house conference was established to promote preparation and connection the week before classes begin each fall. This program includes New Faculty Orientation, professional development sessions, affinity groups, university and college level convocations, school meetings, and social events. Each year, the program evolves and as the lead, I collaborate with college deans, school directors, student affairs directors, and the Center for Faculty Development Advisory Council to ensure needs, scheduling, and objectives are met.

Initiative Lead | Student Resources Website | Student Success | 2021

A collaborative project established to showcase student resources at the institution in an accessible website. Key collaborator, Danielle Sypher-Haley and I approached the design to reach students through questions of needs: Need Academic Help? Need Financial Aid Help? Need Mental or Emotional Help?, etc. The website is updated through continuous contact with collaborators. As an evolution, a partner website is in-progress to support faculty and staff. usm.edu/help

Program Lead, Facilitator, and Institutional Contact | ACUE Faculty Development Institute | Faculty and Student Success | 2018-present

USM began partnering with the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) in fall 2016. The program shifted to my oversight in 2018. Overall, the program offers certificates in Effective College Instruction, Effective Online College Instruction, Advanced Certificate, Microcredential in Fostering a Culture of Belonging, and modules in embedding career guidance into the classroom. The program led to cultural change and deeper institutional valuing of teaching with approximately 1/3 of USM faculty earning a credential by 2024. In 2023, our program was recognized by the National Higher Education Teaching Conference as one of 7 institutions recognized with the inaugural award as "Movement Maker." I have facilitated weekly in-person and hybrid meetings with our faculty and staff across all programming and I am featured throughout the modules for evidence-based teaching practices.

Chair (Provost Appointed) | USM Vision 2020-Faculty Governance and Representation Committee and Implementation Committee | Faculty Success | 2017-2019

This multi-year initiative reorganized the university from six to four colleges and from departments to schools. The Faculty Governance and Representation committee was one of three major tiers and its charge centered on re-envisioning all governance bodies from schools to colleges to university levels through the lens of the "Vision 2020" USM Reorganization Plan. The Faculty Governance and Representation

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Committee established 4 broad initiatives which facilitated the implementation of the reorganization.

Chair | QEP Research and Design | Student Success | 2014-2016

The Quality Enhancement Plan research and design committee concluded with the final selected topic of Gateways and Pathways with attention to DFW rates in gateway courses and pathways guidance for internships and careers. The committee defined learning outcomes, reviewed literature, and best practices, organized an implementation plan, developed assessment plans, supported the QEP submission process and SACSCOC On-Site visit.

SELECTED SERVICE CONTRIBUTIONS

UNIVERSITY

Committee member | Institutional Planning Committee | President appointed | 2023
Committee created plan for institutional planning for AY 2023-24

Committee member | Institutional Continuity Committee | Vice Provost appointed | 2020
Committee oversaw course planning across Academic Affairs during pandemic.

Faculty Liaison | JUMP Scholars Program | 2012-2018

Bridge program for incoming freshmen, which includes cohort structure in 2 general education courses and university skills course. *Responsibilities include* developing curriculum, review of applications, pre-planning, and implementations for the layout of the four-week session.

Chair | Academic Council | 2016-17

University level curriculum committee that provides general supervision over undergraduate academic affairs such as curricula, retention requirements, degree requirements, General Education Curriculum, and assessments, major, minor, and emphasis area requirements. **Chair Elect | 2015-16, Member | 2014-17**

Member | Academic Leadership Council | 2016-17

An advisory council to the provost.

Institutional Leadership Team | SACSCOC re-accreditation visit | 2016

Chair | University Assessment Committee | 2012-2014

College of Arts and Letters representative to this committee that reviews degree program assessment reports for USM. **Committee Member | 2011-2012; 2016-17**

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COLLEGE

Faculty Affiliate | Visiting New Zealand Fulbright Scholar, Dr. Karen Barbour | 2022
As Faculty Affiliate, Dr. Barbour and Dr. Lester collaborated on creative and scholarly research related to somatic movement education and environmental studies.

Committee member | **Faculty Evaluation Committee** | 2021, 2017, 2016
Committee of three peers who conduct School and program level reviews for faculty teaching, research, and service for academic year.

Committee member | **College Advisory Committee** | 2017-18
Committee reviews tenure and promotion dossiers for the College of Arts and Letters.

SCHOOL

Director of Assessment | 2017-2018
Planning and oversight of assessment for new School of Performing and Visual Arts, including GEC 04 Aesthetic Values courses and program level.

Conference Coordinator | **American College Dance Association South Region** | 2014-16
Planning and implementation for ACDA South Regional Conference at USM March 2016 *Responsibilities Include:* budget, scheduling of spaces, concerts, and class schedules, website management, registration oversight, communication with national office, task assignment for faculty and student volunteers.

Committee Member | **Promotion and Tenure Committee** | 2013-2021
Committee reviews and recommends colleagues at the school and program level for promotion and tenure.

Publicity Coordinator | 2012-13
Oversight of department of dance promotional materials for recruitment. Partnering with creative services, this role included envisioning new materials and looks to brand the department, overseeing edits and final proofs of new print materials and website.

Dance Appreciation Coordinator | 2009-2018
As course coordinator, duties included writing and submitting assessment report and plan for Dance Appreciation (DAN 130) and mentoring new course instructors.

LEADERSHIP TO THE PROFESSION

American Council on Education Women's Network Executive Council | 2024-2027
Member with contributions to state networks through mentorship, leadership development and as a liaison between the network and the American Council on Education (ACE). The Council advises ACE on issues pertaining to the overall

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functioning of the ACE Women's Network and women's leadership needs in higher education. Members also serve as speakers and facilitators at ACE and state network events. <https://www.acenet.edu/Programs-Services/Pages/communities/ACE-Womens-Network-Executive-Council.aspx>

President | National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) | 2021-2022

NDEO is a membership organization that supports and advocates for dance education across all sectors. Key initiatives and priorities of Presidency: Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JDEI) Audit of NDEO with consultant Maryland Nonprofits with 90 board members, staff, and members serving as workgroup auditors, Incorporation of Action and Accountability Committee to ensure continued alignment of JDEI priorities, Strategic Planning to align with JDEI initiative. <https://www.ndeo.org/About>

Additional contributions: **Past-President** | 2023-35, **President-Elect** | 2019-2020, **Treasurer** | 2016-2019, **Policy Board of Directors** | 2011-2016

Chair | Dance 2050: Think Tank for the Future of Dance | 2017-2020

NDEO initiative included written vision statement and collection of work in the field; current initiatives include widening the circle to connect dance sectors and attend to diversity and global perspectives.

Co-Founder, Performer, and Choreographer | Hub Dance Collective | 2012-2022

The only professional modern dance company in Hattiesburg, MS. My role included publicity, writing grants, managing budgets, overseeing production elements.

Board of Directors | International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association | 2012-2015

ISMETA is a membership organization which offers services to support somatic movement therapists and educators. ISMETA maintains a professional registry of qualified practitioners and ensures that Somatic Movement Training Programs uphold high standards of education and practice. <https://ismeta.org/about-ismeta>

Co-Director | Eastwest Somatics Institute | 2017-present

Role includes managing annual programming and scheduling, creating and publicizing call for papers, reviewing proposals, creating schedule of events, communicating with presenters and participants. **Conference Chair and program Coordinator** | 2006-2016

Board of Directors | New York State Dance Education Association | 2008-2010

Student Representative | 2007-2008

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GRANTS

Venture Well | Ecosystem Futures Fellowship | 2024 submission, currently in review

Lester, K. F. (Co-PI), Tian, H. (Co-PI). "Rebuilding from the Mathematical Ground-First Steps to a More Inclusive STEM I & E Ecosystem. \$35,000.

Mississippi Artificial Intelligence Network (MAIN) grant | 2023-present | sub-awardee

through Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College | S. McLendon (Co-PI), Lester, K.F. (Co-PI), Leuty, M. (Co-PI). Funds used to recruit and market "Introduction to AI" course from Intel/Dell and establish and artificial intelligence lab at USM. \$41,516.83

Department of Education Strengthening the Institution Program | not awarded | 2023

Lester, K. F. (PI), Masterson, D. (Co-PI), Reid, J. (Co-PI). "Improving Student Degree Attainment: A Comprehensive Institutional Approach." FY 2023 (not awarded, score 90/106), \$2,015,795

ARTS FOCUSED

Lester, K. F., Smith, L. S., "Mary Roberts: Connecting Students to a Commercial Dance Career," Sponsored by Partners for the Arts, University of Southern Mississippi, \$2,000.00. | 2023

Lester, K. F., "Mississippi Arts Commission Individual Artist Fellowship-Choreography," Sponsored by Mississippi Arts Commission, State, \$3,700.00. | 2020

Lester, K. F., "Hub Dance Collective Summer Concert Series," Sponsored by Partners for the Arts, Local, \$1,250-\$3,500. | 2019, 2018, 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013

Lester, K. F., ""Jazz is.... Dance Project" with Melanie George (guest artist)," Sponsored by Partners for the Arts, Foundation, \$2,500.00. | 2018

Lester, K. F., "ClancyWorks Guest Artist Residency," Sponsored by Partners for the Arts, Foundation, \$3,000.00. | 2013

Lester, K. F., "Clancyworks Guest Artist Residency," Sponsored by Mississippi Arts Commission, State, \$4,000.00. | 2013

Lester, K. F., "ClancyWorks Guest Artist Residency," Sponsored by Partners for the Arts, Foundation, \$3,000.00. | 2013

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI-INTERNAL GRANTS

Stengrim, L. A. (Co-PI), Lester, K. F. (Co-PI), Broome, J. H. (Co-PI), "Creating Synergy Among Peer-to-Peer Programs," Sponsored by University of Southern Mississippi, Foundation, \$10,000.00. | 2020

Lester, K. F., Kinnell, A. M., Dornan, E. L., "Applied Learning Opportunities Going Beyond the Classroom," Sponsored by Office of the Provost, University of Southern Mississippi, \$1,500.00. | 2019

Lester, K. F., "Supplementary Research Travel Support Grants," Sponsored by Office of the Provost, \$1,000.00. | 2019

Lester, K. F. (PI), Lentz-Hill, E. (COPI), Yaoyuneyong, G. (COPI), Kinnell, A. M. (COPI), Hrostowski, S. (COPI), Stanback, E. B. (COPI), Tuuri, R. A. (COPI), "Fleshed Out: The Body Politic," Sponsored by Interdisciplinary Investigations, College of Arts and Letters, University of Southern Mississippi. \$5,000 | 2016 – 2017

Lester, K. F. (PI), Lentz-Hill, E. (COPI), Sponsored by Peggy Jean Connor Research Award, The Committee on Services and Resources for Women. \$1,500. | 2016

Lester, K.F. (PI) Sponsored by Audrey Keith Lucas and Ella Ginn Lucas Endowment for Faculty Excellence Award for "Exploring Somatic Principles in Relationship to Teaching Dance" \$2,600. | 2012

Lester, K. F. (PI), Early, M. (COPI), "Investigating the Duet Form" Sponsored by College of Arts and Letters Research Grant \$3,000. | 2012

HONORS, AWARDS, AND RECOGNITION

Outstanding Service, SUNY Brockport Alumni Association Award | 2024

Recognizes outstanding contributions to your career and/or your community and/or alma mater.

NDEO Presidential Award | 2024, 2020, 2019, 2014

Recognition of service contributions to the organization by the NDEO President.

Movement Maker (for University of Southern Mississippi) | 2023

Inaugural recognition at the National Higher Education Teaching Conference for investment in faculty, demonstrated student impact, and vocal advocacy for teaching development in higher education.

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Distinguished Friend of Student Affairs, University of Southern Mississippi | 2022

The annual award recognizes a university member outside of student affairs who has served as a partner with significant impact.

Dean's Award for Exemplary Leadership and Service | 2020

Inaugural award recognizing leadership and service, specifically Lester's contributions during the global pandemic to support faculty and staff in transitioning to remote work.

Higher Education Appreciation Day Working for Academic Excellence | 2018

Mississippi Legislature recognition of a faculty member at each institution for exceptional contributions to teaching, research, and service

Innovation in Teaching Award | 2015

University of Southern Mississippi Learning Enhancement Center recognition for innovation in online teaching for dance appreciation courses.

Dean's Creative Achievement Award | 2000

University of Memphis undergraduate recognition for creative research merit

National Merit Scholar | recognized 1996

PUBLICATIONS

Lester, K. F. (2017). **Somatics: A Buzzword Defined**. *Journal of Dance Education*, 17(1), 31-33. [10.1080/15290824.2016.1117615](https://doi.org/10.1080/15290824.2016.1117615)

Lester, K. F. (2015). Moving Consciously: Somatic Transformations through Dance, Yoga, and Touch. (ed. S. Fraleigh & R. Way. **Environments for Self-Learning**. University of Illinois Press. [9780252039409.003.0005](https://doi.org/9780252039409.003.0005)

McGreevy-Nichols, S., Lester, K. F., Smith, M. P. (2014). **DANCE 2050: The Future of Dance in Higher Education**. *Journal of Dance Education*, 14(1), 41-42. [10.1080/15290824.2014.881189](https://doi.org/10.1080/15290824.2014.881189)

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PRESENTATIONS

STUDENT AND FACULTY SUCCESS

INVITED

Lester, K. F., Napier, K., Pittman J., Tollison, S., Zuehkle, J. (2024) Delta State University "The Effects of AI in Higher Education in the State of Mississippi", Cleveland, MS.
<https://www.deltastate.edu/news-and-events/2024/10/dsu-to-host-panel-discussion-on-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-in-higher-education/>

Lester, K. F., (2024), National Higher Education Teaching Conference "From Belonging to Mattering: Centering Classroom Interactions and Connections," Minneapolis, MN.

Lester, K. F., (2023) National Higher Education Teachers Conference, "Creative Practice: Evidence-Based Teaching Demonstration," New York City, NY.

Lester, K. F., Dunnivant, S. Pendelton, L. (2020) SACSCOC Annual Meeting, "What will it take for the student success agenda to succeed?," virtual meeting.

Lester, K.F., Pendelton, L., Happel, H., (2020) California Community College Association of Occupational Education, "Myth #2: Hands on and Active Learning Can't Be Used Online," virtual conference.

Lester, K. F., MacCormack, P., Burgess, L. (2020), American Teacher's Federation-COVID-19 Response, "From Arts to Sciences: How can I teach this class online?" virtual webinar.

Lester, K. F., Blackwell, C. S., Henderson, T.-N., Bless, M. (2019), POD Network Annual Conference, "Investing in Our Core Student Success Asset—The Faculty," Pittsburgh, PA.

PEER REVIEWED

Lester, K. F., (2024) South Regional Faculty and Instructional Development Consortium "From Belonging to Mattering: Centering Classroom Interactions and Connections," Long Beach, MS.

Leuty, M. E., Lester, K. F., (2024) National Higher Education Teaching Conference, "Promoting Student Well-being through Course Design," Minneapolis, MN.

Lester, K. F., Pendelton, L. (2022) POD Network National Conference, "Fostering Belonging and Motivation for Students and Faculty," Seattle, WA. (November 2022).

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Lester, K. F. (presenter), Green, A. N. (2022), Educators' Retreat Fall 2022, "**Inclusivity 101**," Division of Student Affairs and Center for Faculty Development, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

Lester, K. F., Aderer, K. A. (2022) Plan, Prepare, and Engage workshop series, "**Inclusive Design: Lessons from the Pandemic and Rethinking Learning**," Center for Faculty Development, University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS

Pippins, T., Chasteen, A. C., K. Lester, Lawner, E., Snow, M., (2022) American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, "**Can Faculty Development Improve Student Course Outcomes? Evaluating the Impact of Association of College and University Educators–Trained Faculty at the University of Southern Mississippi**," San Diego, CA.

Lawner, E. Lester, K. F., Chasteen, A. C., Pippins, T., Snow, M., (2022) American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, "**Cumulative Academic Impact of Multiple Course Experiences with Instructors Who Have Received Faculty Development Training**," San Diego, CA

Lester, K. F., (2022) Southern Regional Faculty & Instructional Development Consortium, "**Building Community Through Leadership Development**," Southern Regional Faculty & Instructional Development Consortium, Auburn University, Auburn, AL.

Lester, K. F., Kinnell, A. M., (2017) Association of American Colleges and Universities, "**Jump Start to General Education Experience: A Co-Curricular Model**," Phoenix, AR.

Lester, K. F., (2015) LEC Connects, "**Self-Learning in Diverse Environments**," University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

Lester, K. F., (2013) LEC Connects, "**Thinking Outside of the Box in Online Education**," University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS.

DANCE EDUCATION

INVITED

Lester, K. F. (2024), SUNY Brockport Department of Dance "**Dancing through Leadership: How Dance Prepared Me for Multiple Roles**," Brockport, NY.

Lester, K.F., Marshall, C., Ng, N., Curry, F., Curran, T. (2022) National Dance Education Organization "**Connecting to NDEO through Justice, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**," Atlanta, GA.

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Lester, K. F., Nichols, S. M., Arts Education Partnership Meeting, "**A JDEI Journey: A Collaboration with the National Dance Education Organization and Maryland Nonprofits**," virtual webinar.

Lester, K. F., Davenport, D., Kahlich, L., Ursprung, S., Levey, J., (2020) National Dance Education Organization Webinar Series, "**Widening the Circle: Envisioning a Collaborative Future**," virtual webinar.

Lester, K. F., Barry, S., Jones, C., Guigere, M., Erkert, J., (2020) National Dance Education Organization Webinar Series, "**College Dance and The Fall Semester: Administrative Challenges Due to Covid - Q&A, Part 2**," virtual webinar.

Lester, K. F., Schupp, K., Curry, F., Flinn, N., Hathaway, R., Robey, J. (2020), National Dance Education Organization Webinar Series, "**College Dance and The Fall Semester: Administrative Challenges Due to Covid - Q&A, Part 1**," virtual webinar.

Lester, K. F., Megill, B. (2020), National Dance Education Organization-COVID-19 response, "**Identifying our Synergy: Ideas for Online Dance in Higher Ed**," virtual webinar.

PEER-REVIEWED

Lester K. F., Jones, C., Ursprung, S., Rapoza, A. (2024) National Dance Education Organization, "**Dance 2050**," Seattle, WA.

Lester, K. F., Cooper-Ashirifi, M., Casel, G., Ebright, W. (2023) National Dance Education Organization, "**From Dance Educator to Higher Education Administrator**," Denver, CO.

Lester, K. F., Davenport, D., Lakes, R., Morgan, I. (2019), National Dance Education Organization Annual Conference, "**Dance 2050: Changed Contexts, Media, and Mentoring in Dance**," Miami, FL.

Lester, K. F., Davenport, D., Ursprung, S. (2018) National Dance Education Organization, "**Building Pathways of Leadership Through NDEO's Dance 2050 Initiative**," San Diego, CA.

Lester, K. F., Lentz-Hill (2017) National Dance Education Organization, "**Fleshed Out: The Body Politic**," San Antonio, TX.

Lester, K. F., Frichtel, M., Henley, M., Wilcox, A. (2016), National Dance Education Organization, "**Putting Dance 2050's Vision Statement into the Classroom**," Washington, DC.

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Lester, K.F., Kaddar, Y., Megill, B., Vissicaro, P. (2012) National Dance Education Organization, "**Approaches to Teaching Dance Online**," Los Angeles, CA

- World Dance Alliance Conference, Vancouver, BC. | 2013
- **Part 2:** National Dance Education Organization, Miami, FL. | 2013

Lester, K.F. (2012) Learning Enhancement Center (LEC) Connects," **Teaching Dance Online?"** Hattiesburg, MS.

Lester, K. F. (2011) National Dance Education Organization, "**Teaching Dance Appreciation Online**" Minneapolis, MN.

Lester, K.F. (2009) National Dance Education Organization "**3 Models for Teaching Dance Appreciation**" New York City, NY.

Lester, K.F. (2006) National Dance Education Organization, "**The Individual and the Community: Looking at the Creative Approaches of Anna Halprin and Liz Lerman**," Long Beach, CA.

SOMATIC MOVEMENT EDUCATION

PEER REVIEWED

Lester, K. F., (2022) International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association, "**Unwinding the Dance of Somatic Pedagogy**," virtual conference.

Aronson, R. L., Lester, K. F. (2022), Lessac Research and Training Institute, "**Shin Somatics and Lessac Kinesensic Body Work Crossovers and Connections**," virtual conference.

Lester, K. F., Aronson, R. L. (2020) The Lessac Training and Research Institute, "**Crossovers and Connections of Shin Somatics and Lessac Kinsensic Training**," Kent, OH.

Lester, K. F., Controneo, E., Eddy, M., Taylor, M., Davis, C. (2019), National Dance Education Organization, "**The Role of Somatic Movement in the Creative Process of Dance Making**," Miami, FL.

Lester, K. F., Lee, S., Davis, C. (2019) Emerging Pathways within Somatic Movement and Dance Education, "**Charting Our Future: Somatic Practices and Higher Education**," National Dance Education Organization and International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association, New York City, NY.

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Lester, K. F., Ikle, M., Schaeffer, C. , Bush, A. , Purvis, D. (2019) National Dance Education Organization (NDEO) and International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association (ISMETA), "**Dancing Transformations: Empowering, Healing and Honoring Diversity through Shin Somatics®**," New York City, NY.

Lester, K. F., (2015) 2nd Annual Somatics-Based Dance Conference, "**Self-Learning in Somatically Diverse Environments**," Bill Evans Somatic Dance Institute, Dean College, Franklin, MA.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

FEATURED FACULTY

Association of College and University Educators

In the ACUE modules, videos feature Lester's pedagogical approaches and impact in the learning environment. Interviews and sample course materials are integrated throughout the 25-module certification programs. The expert teachers in the modules share evidence-based teaching practices that prioritize active and engaged learning, critical thinking skills, lifelong learning, and course design. Lester's features highlight transparent assignment guidelines, incorporating active and reflective experiences into the online environment, alignment of activities with student learning outcomes, and assessment for group work.

- **Designing Learner-Centered and Equitable modules** | 2022
- **Inclusive Teaching for Equitable Learning** | 2021
- **Effective Online Teaching Practices** | 2021

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

New Faculty Orientation | 2018-present

New Faculty Orientation begins with communication and development opportunities throughout the summer for incoming faculty members. The required 4-day orientation includes welcomes from upper administrators, HR benefits overview, a Campus Connections Fair, essential policy overviews, teaching developing, introduction to software used in daily work, peer-mentor luncheon, and community building.

ACUE Faculty Development Institute | University of Southern Mississippi | 2018-present

The signature program at USM includes weekly online modules and meetings with a facilitator. Faculty and staff are introduced to evidence-based teaching practices, and then incorporate a strategy into a learning environment and submit a final reflection. Weekly meetings are essential to the program to develop a culture and community of

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teaching excellence, to experience teaching strategies, and to problem solve how to apply to diverse disciplines. Lester regularly facilitates microcredentials.

- Promoting Active and Engaged Learning
- Fostering Lifelong Learning
- Designing Learner-Centered and Inclusive Courses
- Embedding Career Guidance into Courses
- Fostering a Culture of Belonging
 - For faculty and staff
 - For administrators

STAND-ALONE WORKSHOPS

The workshops below are offered regularly in the Center for Faculty Development and by invitation.

- Using A.I. (or Not Using A.I.) in the College Classroom
- Building a Sense of Belonging in Your Classroom
- Building Relationships to Help Students Persist
- Creating Transparent Assignment Guidelines
- Developing a Hybrid Course
- Effective Teaching Practices in Online Classes
- Promoting Self-Directed Learning
- Transitioning Your Class Online

CREATIVE RESEARCH

CHOREOGRAPHY

TOUR

The Body Politic (tour 2017-18) An evening length performance with Elizabeth Lentz-Hill—includes Lentz-Hill's solo *My Body Performs*, Lester's solo *In Her Clothes*, and duet *People Issues* with an interdisciplinary response.

- Mississippi Dance Festival, Hattiesburg, MS, September 2017
- Big River Dance Festival, Huntington, WV, September 2017
- Fall Dance Festival, Ocean Springs, MS, September 2017
- The University of the South, January 2018
- Middle Tennessee State University, January 2018
- Austin Peay State University, January 2018
- University of Memphis, January 2018
- Auburn University, March 2018
- Mobile, Alabama K-12 School district, April 2018

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- Chicago, IL self-produced concert, May 2018
- Chicago public and private K-12 schools, May 2018

HUB DANCE COLLECTIVE

Relative Triptych Music: Meredith Monk, February 2010, 3 dancers, as part of guest artist residency at the University of Memphis

- ❖ Restaged for Hub Dance Collective, August 2019
- ❖ Restaged for USM Repertory Dance Company, November 2011
- ❖ Restaged for Southeast Regional ACDFA for Informal Concert Series, Albany, GA, March 2012

Prò ·gress/Pro ·gress', Music: Valgeir Sigurðsson, Lemm Sissay and Henry Torgue, June 2017, trio

- ❖ Restaged Fall Dance Concert, Ocean Springs, MS, September 2017

People Issues, collaboration with Elizabeth Lentz-Hill, Music: Ninja Tuna, Daniel Bernard and Jami Sieber, text: Kelly Ferris Lester and Elizabeth Lentz-Hill, August 2016, duet

- ❖ Restaged *How Do Bodies Perform? As part of Fleshed Out: The Body Politic*, an Interdisciplinary Investigations Series, October 2016

In Her Clothes, Music: Gustav Santaola, Nadia Sirota, June and August 2015, solo

- ❖ Restaged Social Justice and Dance Series, Rochester Fringe Festival, September 2015

Two Colours Music and collaborator: Nicholas Ciraldo, June and August 2014, solo

- ❖ Restaged Dumbo Dance Festival, New York City, NY September 2015
- ❖ Restaged RAD Festival, Kalamazzo, MI, March 2015
- ❖ Restaged Repertory Dance Company, May 2014

Shared Bond Music: Nico Muhly and Kim Scharnberg, August 2013, duet

- ❖ Restaged Dumbo Dance Festival, New York City, NY, September 2014
- ❖ Restaged Brockport Alumni Showcase, New York City, NY, June 2014
- ❖ Restaged RAD Festival, Kalamazoo, MI, March 2014
- ❖ Restaged for Repertory Dance Company, December 2013, ACDFA informal 2014

Shifting Boundaries co-choreographed and performed with Meredith Early, Elizabeth Lentz, and Rebecca McArthur, music: Joby Talbot, December 2012, quartet

- ❖ Restaged for Barefoot Brigade Festival, Dallas, TX, January 2013

If Black Were Skyblue Music: Vitamin String Quartet, November 2010, Self-choreographed and performed solo

- ❖ Restaged 2nd International Somatics and Dance Conference, 2015, Franklin, MA
- ❖ Restaged for Hub Dance Collective Summer Concert Preview at Oddfellows Gallery, Hattiesburg, MS April 2013
- ❖ Restaged for Eastwest Somatics Symposium at The University of Otago, New Zealand, January 2013
- ❖ Restaged for Project: Motion Dance Collective, Memphis, TN June 2010

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REPERTORY DANCE COMPANY-UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Of Remembrance Music; David Lang, Nico Muhly, November 2019, ensemble

- ❖ Restaged for USM Dance Gala, March 2024

Empathy Migrations Music: Ezza Rose, Laurie Anderson, David Lang, March 2019, ensemble

- ❖ Restaged for USM Dance Gala, February 2020

Trajectory Music: Poppy Ackroyd, Pete Sweeny, Patsy Cline, October 2017, solo and ensemble

- ❖ Restaged for Snap Dance for Tempos Dance Festival, Auckland, NZ Oct 2017
- ❖ Restaged for Dance for Film
- ❖ Restaged for Eastwest Somatics Symposium 2017

Concentric Kaleidoscope{Version A} Music: Rene Aubry, December 2016, 4 dancers

Concentric Kaleidoscope {Version B} March 2017, 12 dancers

Etched Breath Music: Roomful of Teeth, November 2015, 6 dancers

- ❖ Restaged for Alabama Dance Festival, January 2016

(Re) Forming Collective Music: Laurie Anderson, Meredith Monk, Todd Reynolds, sound engineer: Kelly Ferris Lester, April 2015, 10 dancers

- ❖ Restaged for the South American College Dance Association(ACDA) Adjudicated Concert Series, Hattiesburg, MS; selected for the **Gala Performance**

Ode to Dolly Music: Dolly Parton, Text: Kelly Ferris Lester, December 2012, 7 dancers

Submerge Music: Hildur Gudnadottir, Max Richter, April 2012, 6 dancers

Clutching For Music: Nico Muhly, October 2010, 4 dancers

- ❖ Restaged for Southeast Regional ACDFA for Adjudicated Concert Series, Tallahassee, FL March 2011; selected for the **Gala Performance**
- ❖ Restaged for Dance on the Coast concert Ocean Springs, MS, February 2011

Space in Between Choreographed and performed with Meredith R. Early, Music: Zoe Keating, October 2010, duet

- ❖ Restaged for mini-guest artist residencies at Sarah Lawrence College, The College at Brockport (SUNY), and The University of Rochester, September 2011
- ❖ Restaged for USM Fall Dance Concert November 2011

Spiraled Tides Music: Osvaldo Golijov, April 2010, 5 dancers

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❖ Restaged for Project: Motion Dance Collective, Memphis, TN June 2010

Turvy-Topsy Music: Tom Zé, November 2009, 11 dancers

❖ Restaged for Southeast Regional ACDFA for Informal Concert Series, Murfreesboro, TN, March 2010

Seeping Through Music: Gretchen Yanover, April 2009, 3 dancers

Outside the Frame (Structured Improvisation) Collaborative project with choreographer Erin Leigh, photographer Danny Rawls, and art professor David Wilkinson and class, April 2009

Constrained Embrace Music: Philip Glass, November 2008, 7 dancers

❖ Restaged at Southeast Regional ACDFA for Adjudicated Concert Series, Murfreesboro, TN, March 2009

❖ Restaged for Dance on the Coast concert, Gulfport, MS, January 2009

COLLABORATIONS WITH THEATRE

Assassins, April 2013, director: Robin Carr

Ragtime: The Musical, USM Theatre and Dance collaboration with the School of Music for Centennial Celebration, March 2010

The Cherry Orchard, November 2008, ACT III, quadrille and waltz

SELECTED PROFESSIONAL

Bicicleta de Baiano, collaboration with Nicholas Ciraldo, musician; music composer: Roberto Velasco, February 2022, solo

❖ Research Showcase, USM, November 2023

Grasped Music: De Capo Players | solo | SUNY Geneseo | 2006, solo

Recurrence Music: John Adams | solo | Chatauqua Institution Faculty Chamber Concert, Chatauqua, NY | 2006

Fractured | ImageMovementSound Festival | 2007

Awen | ImageMovementSound Festival | 2007

the alley | ImageMovementSound Festival | 2006

❖ Best of IMS, Rochester, NY | 2007

❖ New Jersey State Film Festival | 2006

Wrapped Inside | ImageMovementSound Festival | 2005

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PERFORMANCE

PROFESSIONAL

Co-founder and Company Member, Hub Dance Collective, Hattiesburg, MS | 2013-2022

Company Member, BIODANCE, Rochester, NY | 2005-2007

Company Member, Kista Tucker Dance, Rochester, NY | 2004-2007

Co-Founder and Company Member, Metal Velvet Dance Project, Memphis, TN | 2000-2004

Company Member, Project: Motion | 2000-2004

ADDITIONAL TRAINING

Trainer | Eastwest Somatics Institute of Yoga, Dance, and Movement Studies | 2007-present

Registered Somatic Movement Therapist (RSMT) | 2008-present
International Somatic Movement Education and Therapy Association (ISMETA)

Certified Evans Teacher, Bill Evans Method of Teaching Modern Dance, (2012)