

Student Profile

Brandi Kelley – Dance MFA Program



Your Time at UCI

What made you decide to pursue a graduate degree?

Practically, I decided to pursue a graduate degree because I knew that I wanted the option of teaching in higher education with the potential of more job security. But more than that, I had a yearning to develop my ability to speak, write, and ask questions about dance in multiple forms and genres with other professionals in my field.

Why did you choose to come to UCI?

In addition to knowing two former graduates who spoke highly of the program, the chance to work with and learn from UCI's accomplished faculty was very appealing. In particular, I was thrilled at the idea of being in the presence of Professor Loretta Livingston. She was a guest artist many years ago at my college in Oklahoma and left a lasting impression on me in a short time. My time with Professor Livingston and the faculty here at UCI has been impactful and continues to inspire me as both a movement artist and dance educator.

What are your hobbies/passions outside of research?

Hobbies outside of my research include walks in the beautiful California weather with our Chihuahua/pug mix, Wilson, as well as watching films and venturing to breweries in the surrounding cities. I am passionate about keeping up with the state of education in our country and new methodologies, and supporting programs and causes that impact arts education and women.

Reflections

What are you most proud of accomplishing (so far) in your graduate program?

As a movement artist and dance educator, I'm most proud of my commitment to trying new ideas and processes in relationship to dance making and best practices in a classroom. It can be so easy to continue to do what is comfortable and free of any risk of failure or the unknown. Allowing myself the "luxury" of changing my mind and attempting new methods and ideas has been quite the personal accomplishment.

What is your most memorable moment/experience at UCI to date?

Our courses in “Movement Analysis”, “Body and Practice”, and “Critical Issues” made lasting impacts on how I speak and write about dance, my understanding of my own movement practice, and my desire to stay curious and maintain a growth mindset.

Career

What do you see yourself doing in five or ten years?

In 5-10 years, I know without a doubt that I'll be in classroom leading discussion teaching, and creating more curiosity about dance. I hope to be artist directing a multi-genre dance company that exists to create culturally responsive work and to impact the surrounding community as a whole. I also hope to be jamming to the newest popular dance of the time in a house with my husband Jake and a child.

