

I am writing to you to express my concerns about the decision to cut Canterbury's Grade 12 course, informally known to all as "Company".

Company is a performance course and is provided as part of the dance program. It can only be taken in Grade 12 and is widely considered to be THE penultimate destination course for the entire dance program. Company curriculum provides the opportunities for students to create their very own dance piece from creative concept to seeing their piece performed on stage. Students begin preparing - mentally and physically - for this course in Grade 9.

While it isn't a compulsory class in the traditional sense of the term, it is widely considered to be compulsory for students who wish to pursue Dance in post secondary education. Admittance to post secondary Dance programs do depend on the specific and unique experience that Company offers students and so applying to these types of programs without the benefits derived from Company will place these students at a serious disadvantage of getting into these programs. There is significant competition for limited spots. So their post secondary aspirations are in fact at risk without Company.

There were 20 students enrolled in the Company course when it was cancelled, so it is difficult to argue this is a low enrolment class.

There are bigger issues at play here regarding enrollment. Cancelling Company this year has cast a shadow on Company for future cohorts. If Company was cut this year, it is at risk every year. As a destination course for the program, this creates larger implications for the Dance program as families will make other choices. The seeds of doubt have been planted.

Cutting Company has significant impacts to the viability of the Dance program as a whole. Put simply, you can draw a direct line from "Company" to critical funding for the Dance program. Here's why. The pieces created in Company are performed every spring in what is called "Dance Night", which is the major fundraising initiative for the Dance program. In 2019, it brought in over \$25,000 in critical funding for the Dance program. Given there is no supplementary funding for Arts programs, you must understand how crucial fundraising is for these programs.

The school and the Board have indicated that cutting Company doesn't preclude Dance Night from happening. Throughout the course, students create and refine their piece until it is ready to be performed. It is a massive amount of work and extremely demanding. Company produces stage-ready dance pieces, one for each student, and these dance routines are performed at Dance Night for all the parents, families, students and community to enjoy. The auditorium is sold out for two fabulous nights. Company allows students the time and space to create, rehearse and perfect these dance pieces. Without Company, students will not have a forum to do this and Dance Night will not be viable. It will simply revert to a much smaller, ad hoc talent show of sorts. These types of shows already exist at Canterbury and are not fundraising vehicles.

**To be clear, you can run the Company course without Dance Night, but Dance Night doesn't work without Company.**

Lastly, it has been widely acknowledged that re-establishing a normal school environment for students is imperative for the students' well-being. For the Dance students at Canterbury, this is Company. These kids have lost more than we will ever know because of this pandemic. They need to be able to trust again and look forward to all of these typical high school experiences that they've been robbed of having. They've been so hopeful that Company could be re-established this year and it was. And now it is gone. This decision has just gutted these kids and it is heartbreaking. We cannot depend on their resilience to cope with more disappointment in their final year of high school.

I am asking you to ensure the Board does what it can to facilitate another section for Company at Canterbury next semester.