

# Dance NL

## Strategic Plan

2015-2018

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# INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Background

The DanceNL Board of Directors requested assistance in developing an operational and strategic plan to guide the organization for the years 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18, following completion of their previous Strategic Plan. Barbara Richman was contracted to facilitate this work, which began in the summer of 2014. This project was supported by the Canada Council's Leadership for Change Program.

## 1.2 Review and Strategic Planning Process

The process involved the following work elements:

- A start up meeting with the Board President and Vice-President, and the Project Administrator;
- A review of relevant background information including promotional materials, grant applications, governing documents and the previous strategic plan;
- Interviews (18) with Board members, staff and other key stakeholders, including funders, supporters, collaborators and others who have broad knowledge of trends in the Newfoundland and Labrador dance community;
- A multi-year analysis of DanceNL financial trends;
- Discussion of human resource and operational needs with the Project Manager and key stakeholders;
- Research into the external context within which DanceNL operates;
- Analysis of some comparable umbrella dance and cultural service organizations;
- Preparation of discussion documents for use during the Strategic Planning process;
- A one and a half day strategic planning process;
- Development of a final report.

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## 1.3 Project Expectations and Purpose

1.3.1 to clarify understanding of DanceNL's current situation, environment, foundation statements, and structures

1.3.2 to review strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and identified issues

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1.3.3 to establish strategic directions for the future and develop a plan of action that fits within the organization's capacity

1.3.4 to consider options for operational improvement to support effectiveness

This report provides a summary of the consultant's research and of the planning process undertaken with Board and staff. While discussions and research were rich and detailed, the consultant has summarized and organized content to provide synthesized information for ease of use. Additional appendices provide background and analysis for future use.

## 2. CONTEXT

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### 2.1 Organization History

The Newfoundland and Labrador Dance Heritage Think Tank took place in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador (NL), on February 21, 2009. Over thirty people attended in person with others sending ideas and input remotely. Three key recommendations emerged from the discussions:

1. That an NL Dance Association be formed to represent and connect all dance genres in the province
2. That a website be created to link dancers and dance forms in NL and provide information on dance professionals, events, and resources
3. That a university dance program be created, and that dance be further integrated into the K-12 school system

In September 2009 the Founding Board formed with the aim of creating a formal board within one year. DanceNL was incorporated in October of 2010. In the five years of its existence, DanceNL has forged relationships on a national level and is in touch with dance communities across the country. DanceNL enjoys reciprocal memberships with other provincial dance sector organizations and is a member of the Canadian Dance Assembly, and of Business and Arts NL. DanceNL enjoys good relationships with a wide variety of local groups and agencies, and has developed core programming in the form of an annual *Dance Week* and the *NL Moves* workshop series.

DanceNL is a not-for-profit, member based association governed by a volunteer board of directors who are elected from within the membership. Staff are hired on a contractual basis and report to a committee of the Board.

A 2010 Dance Road Map study involved 117 participants – individuals, companies and organizations – from across the province. The purpose of the project was to collate as much information as possible about the amount, type and location of dance activity across the province, and the results demonstrated a wide variety of types of dance, occurring in all regions across the province.

DanceNL holds a unique position in the landscape of sectoral organizations in that its membership represents a wide variety of dance forms, levels of experience and levels of professionalism. DanceNL's membership currently numbers around 70 individuals and organizations, representing professional dancers, dance schools and instructors, social dance clubs and dance academics and enthusiasts. Since Newfoundland and Labrador's dance community is quite small, instituting the infrastructure that best benefits it requires a broad, inclusive membership.

Existing and past programs include:

- 2.1.1 **Dance Week:** a week of participatory dance and dance-related activities, occurring annually in the days surrounding International Dance Day (April 29). Dance Week is designed to promote public knowledge and appreciation of dance.
- 2.1.2 **NL Moves:** a series of introductory workshops led by DanceNL members in a wide variety of dance styles. This program is designed to connect dancers across disciplines and geography, and to promote dance as a participatory activity within the general public.
- 2.1.3 **Dancer in Residence:** in partnership with Memorial University of Newfoundland and Creative Gros Morne, DanceNL initiated a pilot Dancer in Residence program, which integrated the work of a professional dancer into student and community life. Karen Kaeja was the first dancer in residence, and she spent a total of 6 weeks in Newfoundland in the Fall of 2014.
- 2.1.4 **on the MOVE – First Steps:** in partnership with the Dancer Transition Resource Centre – a national organization dedicated to helping dancers transition into and out of a career in dance – DanceNL and the Dance Teachers' Association of Newfoundland have hosted 2 one-day conferences for young dancers (up to 21) and their parents. These conferences are designed to introduce dancers to a variety of dance training programs. The conferences were held in winters 2012 and 2014.
- 2.1.5 **Dance Road Map:** Conducted in 2010, and one of the organization's first projects, the Road Map was a large survey project designed to collect as much information as possible from as many communities as possible to identify dance practitioners, groups, schools, and organizations throughout the province.

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## 2.2 External Context

There are many factors in the external environment that are beyond DanceNL's control, but, since these factors have a significant bearing on operations, it is important to consider them.

The size and nature of the resident market for Dance NL also forms an important context for the development of long-term plans for the organization. This section of the discussion paper examines some of the characteristics of its external environment

### **2.2.1 Market Size and Demographics**

The resident market for DanceNL grew by 1% between 2010 and 2014, from 521,972 to 526,977. Despite the overall growth during this period, the province has shown some out-migration in the last year. With a population of slightly over 200,600, greater St. John's is the second largest metropolitan area in Atlantic Canada, and the 20<sup>th</sup> largest in Canada.

St. John's is the provincial capital of Newfoundland and Labrador and its economy is tied to civil service, the oil and gas industry, Memorial University, and to a lesser extent now to the fishery. The large civil service and the university have been stable centres for the economy, supporting retail, service and business. There is an educated population base, which often can be supportive of arts and culture.

The economy had been growing quickly and for a period led other metropolitan areas in GDP growth. However, in recent years the impact of change in the oil and gas sector, and in iron ore production, has caused a reduction in overall growth. Despite this setback, economic forecasts suggest that the city will continue to grow in the coming years.

### **2.2.2 Environmental Scan**

- Although the general national economic contraction and resulting constraint seem to have reversed slightly in 2015, Newfoundland and Labrador was the only province showing a decline in the economy this year, and the impact of the drop of prices for oil have had an impact on the province. The NL economy is projected to pick up in 2016, and then to level off again unless major projects come on-stream to drive the economy.
- NL has a very high level of unemployment, almost double the national average; there is a significant younger population with fewer jobs and resources.
- There is an increased demand for financial and program accountability by both funding bodies and government agencies.
- Government programs and services for the arts are generally static or contracting.
- While there is a significant national demographic shift towards greater cultural diversity this is less true in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Bulging older populations are increasing in Atlantic region. This is less of an issue in Newfoundland and Labrador, where the population is reasonably well distributed by age. However, the largest single group of residents by age fall into the 45 to 59 age category which trends towards an older population.

### **2.2.3. Dance Community**

Key players in NL dance community include Neighbourhood Dance Works, which annually produces the Festival of New Dance, Kittiwake Dance Theatre, and Dance Teachers' Association of Newfoundland (DTAN). Dance teachers and dance schools are an important part of the dance culture and have been growing in number and size. There are also numerous specialty dance organizations, both formal and informal, that address specific recreational dance forms. Out of 35 organizational Road Map respondents, 17 were dance schools. The remaining organizations were dance presenters (4), companies (6), volunteer organizations (15) and archives (1).

The Road Map also received responses from 82 individuals, 72 of whom identified as dancers, but who also represented dance teachers (40), dance enthusiasts (35), choreographers (31), and other categories of stakeholders including studio owners, dance scholars, administrators, therapists, folklorists, and theatre, circus and music artists.

Memorial University has also become more involved with dance as an art form, and recently developed a Dancer in Residence program in collaboration with the dance community. This program ran a pilot residency in Fall 2014 and plans are in place for a Fall 2016 residency.

A breakdown by style of DanceNL's membership in 2014-15 indicated that 17% of members were involved in Latin & Ballroom dance on a social basis, 15% were contemporary dancers or dance presenters, 14% were dance schools or teachers, 11% were dance enthusiasts, 9% were bellydancers, 9% were NL or UK traditional dancers, 5% each were ballet dancers and fitness instructors, and the remainder represented break dance, burlesque, and dance photography. The membership is very heavily weighted in the eastern Avalon region (the region containing the St. John's metro area), with only a few members each in Central, Western and Labrador.

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## **2.3 Funding Environment**

### **2.3.1 Public Funding**

DanceNL is funded for operations by the Provincial Government's Cultural Economic Development Program. It additionally receives project funding from the Canada Council and the City of St. John's.

Some notable comments from consultations with funders include:

- The breadth of impact on the community, both directly from the organization and also from the individuals who are part of it, makes it a major contributor;
- There is support for the diversity and variety of programming and the way it reaches out to various publics;
- It is filling a major gap by addressing all genres across the province;
- This is a relatively young organization that is still establishing itself and its profile in the eco-system. Credibility is growing, but it has much senior peers, and so must work to develop its presence, services and programming;
- The proportion of the operating budget available for human resources is low and limits the organization's capacity to increase programming;
- If budgets grow, the funder contribution will diminish as a percent of budget and that will be considered a positive change;
- The Canada Council is reviewing its Support Services to the Dance Milieu program and there is some possibility that the importance of regional service organizations to the milieu will be recognized and that there may be more opportunity for funding in the future;
- There are other programs that could be accessed at Canada Council: Grants to Individuals for Professional Development; Travel Grants for artists who are brought in for workshops or special projects, particularly if they relate to the professional community in a broad context.

### **3. Foundation Statements**

#### **VISION**

All forms of dance and dance activity throughout the province of Newfoundland and Labrador are supported, promoted and preserved.

#### **MISSION**

DanceNL is a united voice representing dance and the dance community in Newfoundland and Labrador. We advocate for dance and assist in the development of dance activity for all.

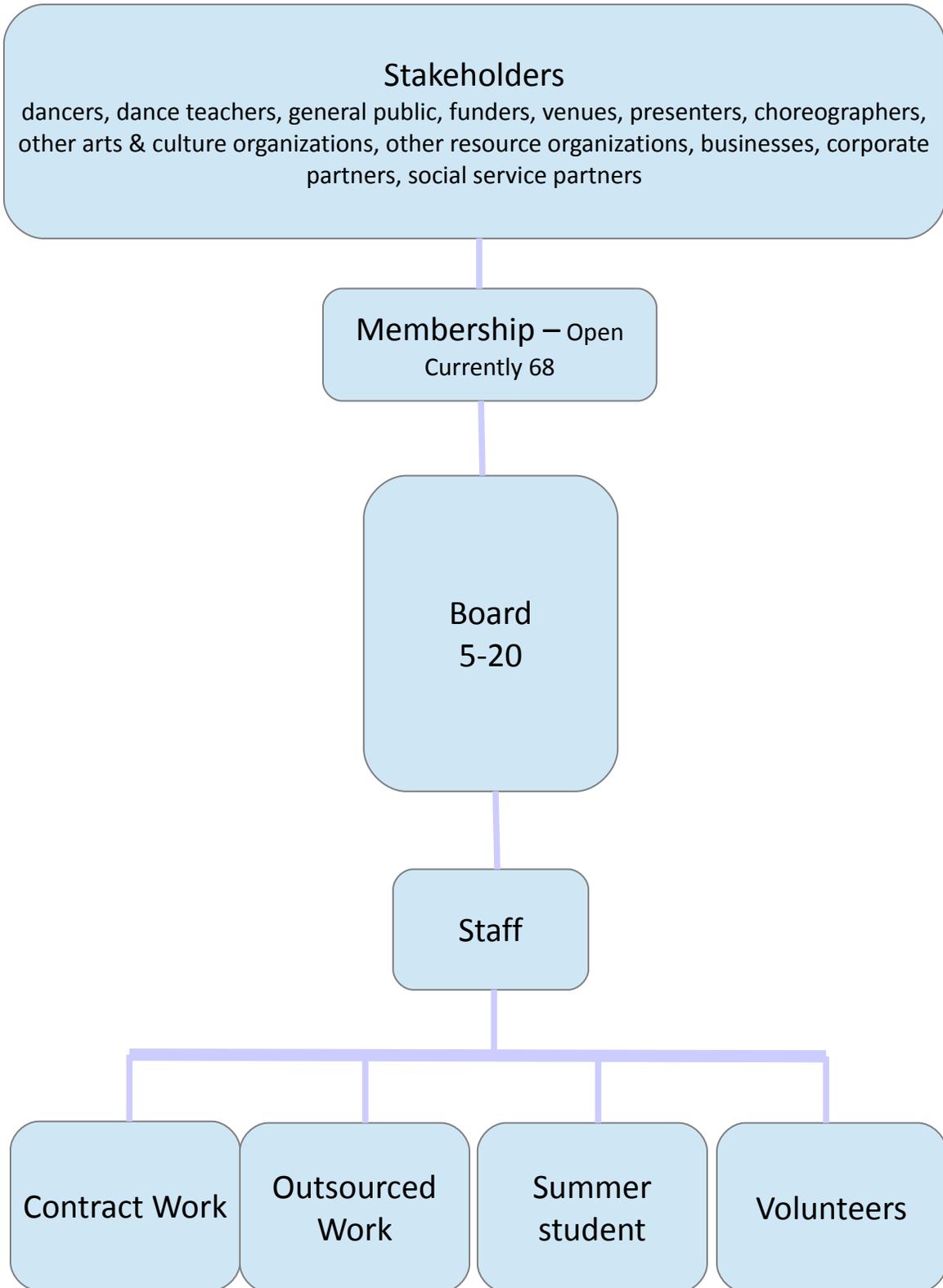
#### **MANDATE**

1. To provide assistance to the Newfoundland and Labrador dance community regardless of geographic location or discipline.
2. To inclusively serve all stakeholders: dancers, dance teachers, choreographers, researchers, productions and design personnel, students, enthusiasts, presenters and others who are part of the dance community.
3. To raise the public profile of dance, increase appreciation and understanding of dance forms, and increase participation in dance activity;
4. To provide the dance community with networking resources and a hub for partnership activity and the exchange of information.
5. To advocate for dance, and issues relevant to our membership, with government, funders, the corporate community and the general public;
6. To promote DanceNL's work in Newfoundland and Labrador;
7. To work to enhance dance education in the K-12 system and at the post-secondary level; and to build recognition of the value of dance for all ages.
8. To assist in the development and maintenance of industry standards for recreational and professional dance activity.

## VALUES

- ***Inclusive***: we are inclusive of all forms of dance and those who support dance activity. We respect personal and cultural differences.
- ***Open Minded***: we understand that the needs of the community are diverse and may change over time.
- ***Productive***: we develop relevant programs and initiatives while advocating for important issues. Our work has impact and gets results.
- ***Responsive***: we respond quickly and appropriately to community input and ideas, supporting our members and community.
- ***Transparent***: we relate our activities to our core mission and mandate and operate with a high level of integrity in administration, program-development and outreach activities. We maintain accurate records and report regularly to our membership and stakeholders.
- ***Professional***: we apply the highest level of professionalism to all our work and take pride in being a source of reliable expertise and information.

#### 4. ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



## 5. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### 1. Revenue Generation

- a. Goal: To increase revenues to support strategic activity
- b. Objectives
  - i. To establish fundraising capacity and initiatives at the Board and staff level
  - ii. To diversify revenue streams by expanding private and earned revenue
  - iii. To gain sustaining funding status with at least one major funder.

### 2. Programming

- a. Goal: To increase depth and reach of programming to achieve our mandate and serve a broader community
- b. Objectives:
  - i. To help develop infrastructure and skills within the professional dance community
  - ii. To involve outlying communities in dance programs
  - iii. To encourage public participation in dance activities

### 3. Relationship Building

- a. Goal: To increase and strengthen relationships to support strategic activity
- b. Objectives:
  - i. To strengthen relationships and build partnerships with key NL dance organizations
  - ii. To initiate and grow strategic relationships with funders
  - iii. To increase participation and joint activities with other national and provincial support and service organizations

### 4. Membership

- a. Goal: To increase DanceNL membership
- b. Objectives:
  - i. To increase our voting membership by 47%, to a goal of 100 voting members
  - ii. To attract members who are dance teachers
  - iii. To increase the number of non-voting (youth or associate) members

### 5. Governance, Operations and Human Resources:

- a. Goal: To stabilize and strengthen operations
- b. Objectives:
  - i. To ensure the effective operations of the organization
  - ii. To ensure timely long range planning and budgeting
  - iii. To institute a succession plan at both a Board and staff level

**6. Profile, Advocacy and Communication**

- a. Goal: To gain wide recognition for DanceNL its mandate and activities
- b. Objectives:
  - i. To improve public and government awareness & recognition of dance activities in Newfoundland and Labrador
  - ii. To promote DanceNL, its members and partners
  - iii. To increase presence and profile with external organizations

**7. Education**

- a. Goal: to increase the presence and value of dance in the education system
- b. Objectives:
  - i. To support continuation and development of post secondary dance initiatives
  - ii. To support continuation and development of K-12 dance initiatives

## 5.1 Revenue Generation

**Goal:** To increase revenues to support strategic activity

**Objectives:**

1. To establish fundraising capacity and initiatives at Board and staff level
2. To diversify revenue streams by expanding private and earned revenues
3. To gain sustaining funding status with at least one major funder

**Responsibility:** Board/staff

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Develop plan to increase fundraising capacity within staff and Board (fundraising training, recruit fundraising specialist to Board, etc)	Institute plan to increase fundraising capacity.	Review and revise plan to increase fundraising capacity.
Develop fundraising plan and committee. Identify targets in the private sector. Implement first private sector campaign (Target - \$2000)	Continue to implement private sector fundraising (Target - \$4000)	Continue to implement private sector fundraising (Target - \$5000)
Consider and develop options for earned revenue	Implement new earned revenue streams (Target - \$1,000)	Implement new earned revenue streams (Target - \$2,000)
Build relationships and collaborative discussions with the Canada Council about Operating Funding	Continue discussions with Canada Council about operating funding; apply to program if appropriate	Continue discussions with Canada Council about operating funding; apply to program if appropriate
Build relationships and discussions with Cultural Economic Development Program about increased funding	Continue discussions with Cultural Economic Development Program Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister.	Continue discussions with Cultural Economic Development Program Officer and Assistant Deputy Minister.
Continue funding discussions with ACOA re funding and apply if appropriate; Research funding options at Dept. of Canadian Heritage	Apply for funding to ACOA and Dept. of Canadian Heritage, if appropriate	Apply for funding to ACOA and Dept. of Canadian Heritage, if appropriate
Research other granting programs in health and recreation, including all 6	Apply to health and recreation programs	Apply to health and recreation programs

Wellness Coalition regions; Apply as possible		
Research employment programs and apply where appropriate	Apply for employment programs	Apply for employment programs

## 5.2 Programming

**Goal:** To increase depth and reach of programming to achieve our mandate and serve a broader community

**Objectives:**

1. To help develop infrastructure and skills within the professional dance community
2. To involve outlying communities in dance programs
3. To encourage public participation in dance activities

**Responsibility:** Programming committee/staff

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Implement Dance Week 2015 and Plan 2016 ; Explore idea of Social Event to encourage networking	Implement Dance Week 2016 and Plan 2017 ; build on Social Event and award concept if appropriate	Implement Dance Week 2017 and Plan 2018 ; build on Social Event and award concept if appropriate
Implement NL Moves 2015-16, working with Kittiwake and National Ballet School as partners; Plan NL Moves 2016-17 & Review to increase efficiency in outreach to disability and family participants	Implement NL Moves 2016-17; Plan NL Moves 2017-18; Review to increase efficiency in outreach to regional, disability and family participants	Implement NL Moves 2017-18; Plan NL Moves 2018-19; Review to increase efficiency in outreach to regional, disability and family participants
Plan, advertise and execute on the MOVE 2016	Review on the MOVE 2016; Plan on the Move 2018	Plan, advertise and execute on the MOVE 2018
Explore and plan programming options with professional community	Implement enhanced programming	Implement enhanced programming
Consider developing programs with municipalities to promote dance activity	Develop pilot municipal program	Evaluate pilot program
	Update Dance Road Map; work with Canada Council to develop accurate representation of dance activity in NL	Share updated Dance Road Map information

### 5.3 Relationship Building

**Goal:** To increase and strengthen relationships to support strategic activity

**Objectives:**

1. To strengthen relationships and build partnerships with key NL dance organizations
2. To initiate and grow strategic relationships with funders
3. To increase participation and joint activities with other national and provincial support and service organizations

**Responsibility:** Board/Staff

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Annually meet with board & staff of Dance Teachers' Association, Neighbourhood Dance Works and Kittiwake to discuss how best to work together to build the dance community.	Annually meet with this group as needed (at least once a year) to discuss how best to work together to build the dance community.	Annually meet with this group as needed (at least once a year) to discuss how best to work together to build the dance community.
Consider adding a member to the Board with skills in relationship building – identify candidates	Bring on a new Board member to assist in relationship building activities	
Meet with funders to discuss DanceNL needs and directions	Annually meet with funders to discuss DanceNL needs and directions	Annually meet with funders to discuss DanceNL needs and directions
Explore and identify strategic relationships with peer support service organizations nationally and provincially, such as MusicNL, Business & Arts NL, Folk Arts Society, etc.	Continue to maintain and build joint initiatives	Continue to maintain and build joint initiatives
Research, seek out and explore relationships with the academic community.	Maintain relationships and develop collaborative initiatives.	Maintain relationships and develop collaborative initiatives.

## 5.4 Membership

**Goal:** To increase DanceNL membership

**Objectives:**

1. To increase our voting membership by 47%, to a goal of 100 voting members
2. To attract members who are dance teachers
3. To increase the number of non-voting (youth or associate) members

**Responsibility:** Board/membership committee/staff support

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Define categories of membership and identify benefit structures, pass at Board level		
Publicize & roll out new membership structures in advance of membership renewal date	Evaluate, review & revise membership categories and benefits as necessary	
Identify and approach other arts umbrella organizations for reciprocal membership	Maintain contact with umbrella organizations	Maintain contact with umbrella organizations
Re-release youth membership survey & dance instructor surveys in Fall 2015	Work with Dance Schools to grow youth membership	Work with Dance Schools to grow youth membership
Promote membership	Continue to promote membership	Continue to promote membership

## 5.5 Governance, Operations and Human Resources

**Goal:** To stabilize and strengthen operations

**Objectives:**

1. To ensure the effective operations of the organization
2. To ensure timely long range planning and budgeting
3. To institute a succession plan at both a Board and staff level

**Responsibility:** Board with staff support

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Develop a two year plan and budget for staffing. Update regularly	Update staffing budget and plan	Update staffing budget and plan
Begin multi-year global budgeting (2 -3 years)	Continue multi-year global budgeting (2-3 years)	Continue multi-year global budgeting (2-3 years)
Hire Admin Assistant and redefine staff roles	Expand staff roles	Expand staff roles
Apply for charitable status	Fulfill charitable status requirements	Fulfill charitable status requirements
Perform a gap analysis of current Board membership to determine the skills present and those required  Identify needs for board membership & recruit strategically to ensure representation by geography, membership category, discipline and gender	Identify needs for board membership & recruit strategically to ensure representation by geography, membership category, discipline and gender	Identify needs for board membership & recruit strategically to ensure representation by geography, membership category, discipline and gender
Develop and pass a strategic plan  Publish strategic plan to membership, funders and other stakeholders	Regularly evaluate activity against the plan  Source funding for next planning process	Regularly evaluate activity against the plan  Develop the next strategic plan
Ensure digital and physical existence of Board handbook and minute book	Maintain Board handbook and minute book	Maintain Board handbook and minute book

## 5.6 Profile/Advocacy/Communication

**Goal:** To gain wide recognition for DanceNL, its mandate and activities

**Objectives:**

1. To improve public and government awareness & recognition of dance activities in Newfoundland and Labrador
2. To promote DanceNL, its members and partners
3. To increase presence and profile with external organizations

**Responsibility:** Staff with Board support

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Develop a value proposition (elevator pitch) for the organization	Promote organization through networking opportunities	Promote organization through networking opportunities
Plan and organize DanceNL attendance and messaging at external committee meetings and events	Plan and organize DanceNL attendance and messaging at external committee meetings and events	Plan and organize DanceNL attendance and messaging at external committee meetings and events
Consider a travel budget for attendance at provincial events	Implement a travel budget to allow more province wide presence	Maintain travel budget to allow more province wide presence
Create budget to support advertising and visible presence at events  Determine policy to best benefit members and partners with advertising budget	Evaluate impact of this activity and plan budget and activity going forward	Evaluate impact of this activity and plan budget and activity going forward
Participate in Folk Art Festival summer '16	Evaluate participation and plan for future	Evaluate participation and plan for future
Continue to promote members and set dates for newsletter activity	Continue to promote members and set dates for newsletter activity	Continue to promote members and set dates for newsletter activity
		Explore an award program to recognize contribution to the dance community

## 5.7 Education

**Goal:** To increase the presence and value of dance in the education system

**Objectives:**

1. To support continuation and development of post secondary dance initiatives.
2. To support continuation and development of K-12 dance initiatives

**Responsibility:** Education committees with staff support

2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Develop DanceNL Board and Member understanding of the Dancer in Residence project & process	Host another evaluation event; continue to promote the project to the dance community	continue to promote the project to the dance community
Advocate for Dancer In Residence Program for 2016-17. Make sure DanceNL has representation on planning/selection committee; make recommendations for project process and development	Budget of Dancer In Residence Project for 2016-17. Make sure DanceNL has representation on planning/selection committee; make recommendations for project process and development	Make sure DanceNL has representation on planning/selection committee; make recommendations for project process and development
Develop & strengthen relationships in the Dept of Education; find people in the Department, School Board, and schools (Teachers and principals, volunteers)	Continue to nurture and build these relationships and look for partnerships and collaborations	Continue to nurture and build these relationships and look for partnerships and collaborations
Check in with peer organizations that have similar school projects	Develop and present a new K-6 or -12 dance program to the Department	Unroll new K-12 or K-6 dance program

## **6. Appendices**

- a. Interview Themes
- b. Planning Presentation
- c. Financial Trend Analysis
- d. Dance Service Organization Comparative
- e. NL Service Organization Comparative
- f. Membership Structures and Benefits
- g. Identified Priorities
- h. Relationship Circle
- i. Consultant's comments on operations