



CADA/BC Members' ~~Un~~conference

your CADA wants to hear from you!

JAN 14

starting at 10:30am

FREE

for CADA/BC Members

food/drink provided

CADA Unconference Summary

January 14, 2012

Facilitator: Julie Lebel

What is an Unconference?:

An unconference is a facilitated, participant-driven conference centered on a theme or purpose. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unconference>. These type of events were born from the desire for people to share and learn in an open environment. It is an intense event with discussions, demonstrations (demos) and interaction from attendees. Anyone with something to contribute or with the desire to learn is welcome and invited to join.

How it worked:

At the beginning of each session the facilitator asked for ideas on the topic. "Topic instigators" were given 2 minutes to present one idea, point of contingency or problem that they were interested in exploring.

After each instigator presented their idea, the group anonymously voted for up to two ideas to be further discussed. As a group we discussed how much time we wanted to discuss these ideas and kept some time at the end of the session to write a summary to bring back to the general membership.

"CADA Myth Busters" (board members) were in the room and their role was to briefly present CADA/BC's current perspective on the topic and correct any misconceptions that arose.

At the end of the day, participants of all sessions were invited to unite in a studio to share a drink and review the day's work.

About CADA/BC & Subsidization:

There are many ways that a career in dance can be subsidized, from the Training Subsidy Program, to the MSP's premium assistance program, to retail discounts for Members. What aspects of subsidization are most important to you as your career develops?

One of CADA/BC's primary concerns is that the socio-economic status of dance artists is well maintained and above the [low-income cut off \(poverty lines\)](#), however this is a complex problem and as such we also work to find ways to offset the expensive nature of this career. Training for a professional dance career is especially expensive as such CADA/BC has worked with the federal and provincial governments to provide the [Training Subsidy Program](#) in an attempt to offset the expense of dance training. We also collaborate with presenters of live art in Vancouver to get discounted ticket prices. As well our members have access to discounts at dance related retail outlets and some dance training facilities in the city. A list of these discounts is found on our Member's Area Forum under "Professional Discounts."

While these programs are a key part of our member's dance careers, are there other ways that the expenses of maintaining this career could be offset? Is the Training Subsidy Program service the membership in the best way possible?

Summary of Session

CADA/BC will:

1. take leadership in defining professional dance training and how it relates to TSP as well as find ways to subsidize training in non-dance forms such as yoga, pilates, gyro, etc.
2. broaden the notion of training looking at the ways genres like urban dance train and the idea of internships
3. explore the idea of members donating their TSP to other members

About CADA/BC & Dance Citizenship:

What does it mean to be part of a dance community? What is the most effective way to talk to each of the levels of government? We all struggle with the negotiation of looking out of our own careers while participating in a larger community. What does being a Member of an organization like CADA look like? How can we participate at our fullest?

At CADA/BC we know that being a part of a community is important to dance artists and that CADA/BC in some ways is a collecting point for the dance community. We have a member only website that allows our members to post information about what they are up to.

We have historically held meetings and parties for members, but that hasn't happened in sometime. Our relationship with CDSTV (now Working Class) has also put us as a centre point of the dance community. Could we be doing more? Or focusing our energies elsewhere?

We have also participated in various types of advocacy work throughout our time. From holding close relationships with organizations like Actsafe and Canadian Dance Assembly to sitting on committees for International Dance Day, BC Days and Culture Days to being at the forefront when things change like HST or SOCAN fees we are watching as things change for our members. We try to ensure that dance artists understand how to vote in elections at all levels of government as well as are aware of opportunities to submit their opinions on changes in legislation that affect the life of an artist. Is this the best focus of our advocacy energies? What topics do our members really care about?

What could CADA/BC do for our membership and dance artists in Western Canada to propel dance forward as an essential part of the culture force? How to we ensure every dance artist feels a part of the community and has the knowledge and voice to advocate for themselves and the sector?

Summary of Session

The group identified three themes to focus CADA's energies on to achieve the kind of dance citizens we want:

1. Rights and responsibilities for membership
2. Activate the Membership and Community at Large
3. Connect the dots internally and externally

Ideas to achieve this:

- 10 CADA members at every dance performance
- Topic-based, by-invitation coffee houses (1/month including Members, Non-Members and administrators)
- CADA presence at industry conferences with community support for registration fees, billets, etc
- Pairing members together at events
- Work with presenters for tickets to take someone whose never been before
- Map the community (we know and don't know)
- CADA members to show themselves on their website, email signatures and bios
- Create membership tool kit (like culture days)
- Action requirement for Membership ex. Volunteer in the community, recognition of membership, refer new members, renew expired members
- Outline responsibly of membership
- Place to report back on the website
- Place to show video work on the website
- Member challenges/group problem solving
- List of member wants

- Monthly newsletter including: professional standards focus, member highlight, advocacy challenge, upcoming meeting dates

About CADA/BC & Best Business Practices:

As our field evolves and deals with the ever changing economic environment, so does our business practices. Our wages, our employment terms, our working conditions are constantly under pressure. How would you like your business practices to grow?

CADA/BC publishes two documents as a base guideline for labour practices in the professional dance market. These are the [Basic Dance Agreement](#) and the [Fees & Rates Standards](#). In addition to these documents, there is an extensive [resource section](#) on the website that offers information on making dance happen, self-employment as a dance artist, revenue generation and support for a dance career and how to manage a professional life. All these online resources are available without being a member of the organization. We also have a Member's Area on the website which serves as a place for our membership to find information and share opportunities with each other.

In addition to the resources online we also work with the other service organizations to provide workshops on taxes, grant writing, health care, contracts, negotiation, etc. Kristina Lemieux, Program Coordinator, is also available for questions and counselling on these topics at any time.

Summary of Session

CADA received support for all its programs. A few additions were suggested for the Basic Dance Agreement: add information about first aid i.e. who is trained and where is the nearest kit, designate a dance captain to work between the dancers and the choreographer on issues such as breaks and safe work conditions. It was also suggested that a contract one-sheet or checklist be developed.

The discussion then turned to how CADA could organize itself to better serve the community. These were the suggestions:

- Changes/additions to the committee structure:
 - Add a communications to a current committee or create a new committee for it
 - Create a contract/grievance committee
 - Create a fun raising committee
- Find ways to use co-op students
- Know the expertise of our community so that we can resource share with our skills

The key theme of the day was that each member wants to feel as strong as all the members combined.

