

## **Research Grant – Spring 2014**

**Faculty member: Andrew Carroll**

**Unit: School of Theatre and Dance**

**Project/Proposal Title:** *Speaking Witlwut Words: Reaching Out; Recognizing Warning Signs of Suicide, and Interdisciplinary Investigation to Create a New Language in the Architecture of Suicide Awareness and Education*

### **Abstract:**

As a tenure earning faculty member, I am seeking funding to continue my research agenda of utilizing the medium of dance within a video structure to create a new language in the architecture of social awareness and education. This new project specifically seeks to build a dance video that addresses and illustrates warning signs of suicide. The funding will be used to support the travel and hotel accommodations for dancers from the acclaimed dance company Hubbard Street Dance Company in Chicago, who have written with interest to participate in this interdisciplinary venture which will pair USF and Hubbard Street.

### **Proposal:**

The ambition of this research project is to create a dance video illustrating warning signs of depression to be used for suicide awareness and education. This proposal follows my research track of using a dance video as a new language to articulate concepts and ideas beneficial for the advocacy, education and awareness of social issues. This will follow on the heels of two prior research projects which initiated this line of creative investigation; a video on Bullying and another on Dating Violence. These two former videos have proven successful in the respect that they have been adopted by organizations nationally and internationally representing the respective issues. Currently, the videos have been adopted for use in Australia, Northern Ireland, Germany, Belgium and Greece among others. Here in the United States, each has been adopted by the entire Los Angeles public school system which comprises over one thousand schools. The Dating Violence video has also been requested by the Centers for Disease Control on Atlanta (The CDC) for use in its preventative programs. It is my goal to generate a similar means of expression on behalf of suicide advocacy.

I am humbled that my video work has caught the attention of the world acclaimed dance company Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. In an email written to me, the Artistic Director has indicated that his dancers would be willing participants in my future video work, therefore the activity for this venture would begin by securing the talents of two dancers from this company to portray the two leads of this video. Simultaneously, my research would demand that I initiate conversations with experts in the suicide field to best determine what concepts would be of benefit for awareness and education. The Office of The Chief of Staff of The Los Angeles Unified Public School system has already offered an authority in this field. I would utilize those on the USF campus as well to solicit valuable information regarding suicide awareness to begin the process of building a storyboard which best reflects the information these specialists will impart. When this storyboard is in place, the project will then move to the studio to begin the process of experimentation with movement to discover dance vocabulary that illustrates the identified concepts. Once this trial and error process reveals honest and artistic interpretative phrases, the subsequent filming of these phrases of movement in both theatre and location settings will occur. This will culminate into a detailed

editing process of stringing the phrases cohesively with the selected musical contributions into a logical sequence that will bring the project to life.

This proposal supports key strategic initiatives of the University, College and School including:

University: Strategic initiative #2 "USF will, through its high-impact research and innovation, change lives for the better, improve health, and foster sustainable development and positive societal change," Mission #2,#3 "dissemination and translation of new knowledge across disciplines," "embrace innovation," CoTA mission "engaged locally and nationally in contemporary issues and initiatives, and SOT AD's value of interdisciplinary work.