

## Transcript for Conversations @ KAFM: CMUnow: Nov 2019

**Katlin Birdsall:** Remarkable accomplishments are happening everyday on the Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College campuses. From faculty instruction and research, to student projects and community involvement. CMUnow is a new monthly segment on the KAFM community affairs hour, where we interview faculty, athletic coaches, and students to keep you up to date on all things CMU and WCCC. I'm Katlin Birdsall along with my co-host David Ludlam, and we'll have three guests on the show today. And our first guest is Assistant Professor of Dance and Dance Program Coordinator, Amanda Benzin. Welcome to the show today!

**Amanda Benzin:** Thank you so much for having me.

**David Ludlam:** Welcome.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Yeah, we were just talking before the show that you know, you're right in the middle of getting ready for the upcoming fall dance concert. So we really appreciate that you took the time out of your schedule to come and chat with us.

**Amanda Benzin:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Okay, so why don't we kick it off with, you know, we were just looking at kind of your background before you came on the show.

**Amanda Benzin:** Mhmm.

**Katlin Birdsall:** And not only are you an educator but you have degrees from the State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of Colorado Boulder, you're a performer, a choreographer, you've kind of toured the country nationally and internationally, you've won an Emmy award for your work. And the list kind of goes on and on and on. And we are really fortunate to have you at CMU. But I was hoping you could maybe take us back to where it all started, and what first drew you into the world of dance?

**Amanda Benzin:** Yeah, I actually have my parents to thank for that. I've been in dance since I was three years old. I have a lot of energy, so my parents decided to try dance. And I cried for the first couple of weeks and wouldn't let go of my mom. And then I wouldn't stop dancing.

**Katlin Birdsall:** It's just continued from there?

**Amanda Benzin:** Yeah, they didn't think I would last this long based on that initial experience but, yeah, I love it, and have a passion for it and, keep doing it.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Great!

**David Ludlam:** Well Amanda, one of the things that I do often is I torture my two girls by having them listen to the music that I relate to the most from my childhood. And, I'm wondering, I look at all the different genres that are out there, the types of dance that are available to students at CMU. And the easy answer is they all have their own good attributes which is true. What I really want your opinion on is, what is your favorite type of dance, and why?

**Amanda Benzin:** This is always the hardest question for me because I think what's been important in my background and how we train our students at CMU is versatility really matters to have longevity in a career. So I've kind of considered myself a generalist that has a fine attention to detail in every form. But if I were you know, forced to choose, I would have to say the tap right now.

**David Ludlam:** And is that because of your childhood and that introduction to dance that your parents gave you. Is that the type of dance that you experienced?

**Amanda Benzin:** That is what I started with and then I grew up watching all of the old movie musicals with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers and Gene Kelley, and my dad even did the scene in *Singing in the Rain* where they flipped the couch over as a kid. So rhythm has kind of always been important in my family. And that's how I started and it's, yeah, I would say that that's my first love. So if you had to twist my arm David, I would say tap.

**David Ludlam:** Tap? Okay, tap. Alright. Well I won't force you to talk about your least favorite, we won't go there.

**Katlin Birdsall:** You are listening to CMU now on KAFM community affairs and our first guest today is Assistant Professor of Dance, Amanda Benzin. So we were just kind of talking about obviously all the different kinds of dance and everything that you're teaching our students. And we have an upcoming production this weekend, the fall dance concert. So can you maybe talk to us a little bit about what we can expect to see there?

**Amanda Benzin:** Yeah, so the fall dance concert is entitled "Discovering Me", and it fits in with our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary season that's about inquiry, discovery, and celebration. So we decided that the fall concert would focus on discovering me and it's really kind of an interrogation of self-identity and how we identify as choreographers and dancers and how can we communicate that through the body. So you'll see a lot of different diverse techniques: contemporary ballet, modern jazz, hip-hop, tap, fusions of all of those things as ways that we've found to represent ourselves in the current moment. Or even past selves.

**Katlin Birdsall:** I love that! And that is coming up this Friday and Saturday,

**Amanda Benzin:** Mhmm.

**Katlin Birdsall:** And the tickets are still available for anyone listening too.

**David Ludlam:** Well, I kind of heard in what you just said, this sort of thematic focus on expression of the individual.

**Amanda Benzin:** Mhmm.

**David Ludlam:** And so you have faculty and guest artists and student choreographers all working towards that theme. How were their original works chosen? Like what's the process for how you chose the type of performance that is going to be featured?

**Amanda Benzin:** Yeah, so we choose the guest artist that visits us every semester and we try to bring in someone that offers something different than what our current faculty offer. So our guest artist, Bailey Anderson, her research lies at the intersection of disability studies and dance. So a lot of her piece is about identity in that realm. And then each choreographer as far as faculty go, have just kind of been given free rein to decide how they're going to express that themselves. So for me and my work, I have collaborated with a local graffiti artist actually, Blaine Bell, who has created artwork for my piece that's inspired by the choreography. And the choreography is really inspired by that idea of versatility that I spoke to you about earlier, of how do I combine all of these forms into one body, into one piece? And as far as student works go, they actually applied at the beginning of the semester to judicate for the dance concert, they start rehearsals. And then we see their pieces and then as a faculty panel we decide what student works will be in the faculty concert and what student works will go into the student production.

**David Ludlam:** Great.

**Katlin Birdsall:** That's amazing.

**Amanda Benzin:** Mhmm.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Well, you are listening to CMUnow on KAFM community affairs and our first guest today is CMU Assistant Professor of Dance, Amanda Benzin. So we are talking about the fall dance concert and I was saying, I know that I am going to be attending. I'm really excited to see it, and how you mentioned also with the graffiti artists. I always love any time that it's, you know, you're going and it's not just about the dance but incorporating other aspects of art into it I feel like always adds another level. And so for me, you know obviously working at CMU, I know why CMU is amazing and wonderful and how we have so many incredible programs that students can attend. But, you know if you were talking to somebody, what would you say sets the dance program apart from other colleges and universities? Because I know that students have a lot of different options out there.

**Amanda Benzin:** Yeah, absolutely. I would say the two main things are the individual mentorship that they get through faculty and our faculty has this amazing background. I'm still a performer, and active in the community so, having access to that network as well. But the one-on-one mentorship and the smaller class size really personalizes their education to make them the best dance artist going forward into their future. And I think the other aspect is that versatility that we equally value ballet, modern tap and jazz which is very rare for dance programs to have beginning through advanced levels in all of those forms.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Hmm. That's interesting. And you know I, that's what I love too, working at CMU, I feel like I find out new things about what we offer as an institution all the time.

**David Ludlam:** Yeah. And Amanda you just mentioned the personalization piece of it and I wanted to ask you about that.

**Amanda Benzin:** Mhmm.

**David Ludlam:** At an institution like Colorado Mesa University because of the class sizes and the ratios is where you get that, a lot of personal interaction with students. I imagine that you develop deep and long lasting relationships with students. Can you think of a couple students that have maybe gone on to do things that maybe stand out in your mind as remarkable or who are currently dancing professionally. Just a couple stories about students that have done something that you're still in touch with, those meaningful relationships.

**Amanda Benzin:** Yeah, I think that individual mentorship and especially as you're an artist trying to create your own choreography that you're trying to have that sounding board. So we have students that are out both in the local community as well as nationally that are performing as well as creating works. We'll also have students that have dual degrees within our program. So they've majored in design & technology as well as dance, and are finding the intersection of that in working at other institutions using those skill sets.

**David Ludlam:** Great, do you have time for one more?

**Amanda Benzin:** Sure!

**David Ludlam:** So, this is a question that I was thinking about earlier. And it's again going back to the idea of individuality. And you talked a little bit about in your bio about courage of vulnerability.

**Amanda Benzin:** Mhmm.

**David Ludlam:** And I'm thinking about dance is inherently, it seems like it's a vulnerable thing.

**Amanda Benzin:** Absolutely.

**David Ludlam:** What do you mean, what do you mean by that? What is a courage of vulnerability as it relates to dance?

**Amanda Benzin:** Yeah, I actually just guest taught for a colleague of mine in a living arts class. And we did a little preview of the show and how do you look at dance and talk about dance. And it was kind of set up like a proscenium so they were in the audience and the dancers were dancing and then I flipped the script on them so they had to go up on the stage that we created and the dancers sat in the seats. And I asked those students who have not always performed or some of them have never been on a stage, how did that feel? And they all realized they tried to go as far back as they could to hide. So, being able to show your art in front of other people and

in front of other eyes is inherently a vulnerable task. And what we ask them to do on a daily basis in technique class is bring their whole selves and their bodies and give their art and of themselves every day.

**David Ludlam:** Well, being 6' 5" and lanky you can understand why I asked the question, maybe you can give me some pointers in the future so...

**Amanda Benzin:** Absolutely, you should come take the class!

**David Ludlam:** Alright.

**Katlin Birdsall:** That's great. So before we let you go today, can you just give us a quick rundown on the fall dance concert, kind of all of the details that are coming up for this weekend?

**Amanda Benzin:** Yep, so Discovering Me, the fall dance concert opens on Friday November 15<sup>th</sup> at 7:30. We also have two shows on Saturday the 16<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm and 7:30. Tickets are \$16 for adults, \$13 for seniors, and \$7 for students. And they can go online, call the 1-800 number, or get tickets at the box office before the show.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Great! Well thank you so much again for taking the time out of your schedule to come on today.

**Amanda Benzin:** Absolutely, thanks for having me!

**David Ludlam:** I'm going to sign up for that tap dancing class

**Amanda Benzin:** Yeah! We have beginning tap next semester.

**David Ludlam:** See you there!

**Katlin Birdsall:** Alright, don't go anywhere because we are going to take a short break. And we'll be back with Dr. Kathleen Hall, PhD, certified adult and geriatric nurse practitioner, and Dr. Bridget Marshall, DNP, certified pediatric nurse practitioner and co-coordinators of the graduate nursing program.

#### SEGMENT BREAK

**Katlin Birdsall:** Welcome back to CMUnow, a monthly show where we talk about the remarkable work happening at Colorado Mesa University and Western Colorado Community College. We'd like to welcome our second guest today, Dr. Kathleen Hall, PhD, certified adult and geriatric nurse practitioner, and Dr. Bridget Marshall, DNP, certified pediatric nurse practitioner. And they are both co-coordinators of the graduate nursing program. Welcome to the show ladies!

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** Thank you for having us!

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** Thanks for having us!

**David Ludlam:** Yeah, and thanks for being here. And you know, graduate nursing programs at the university are relatively new. I think, to get us started can you just give us some background on the graduate nursing programs that we offer at CMU? What are they all about and what's the background?

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** So, about 2012 our community partners met with some of the nursing faculty. And they identified a shortage particularly in the area of primary care in Western Colorado.

**David Ludlam:** And who are the community partners? Who are the partners?

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** People from the area hospitals, community members, home health agencies, and long term care agencies, etc.

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** Health department.

**David Ludlam:** Gotcha.

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** Basically anybody that's in any kind of health delivery agency or system.

**David Ludlam:** Okay.

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** And they reached out to the faculty at the time at the nursing school. And they basically said, "We have a shortage of primary care providers in Western Colorado, can you help us?" And the visionary faculty at the time sought funding from the Colorado Health Foundation, and received, I don't remember the amount, but an award basically to start the graduate nursing programs at Colorado Mesa. And at the time, we created the nurse educator masters. And the doctor of nursing practice with the doctorate coming also with the family nurse practitioner certification. Since that time, we've come to find out that quite a number of nurses in the community want to be nurse practitioners, but don't necessarily want to become doctorally prepared nurse practitioners. So this fall, the fall of 2019, we actually initiated the masters of science and nursing with the family nurse practitioner certification coming with that at the master's level. So, now you can enroll as either a master's prepared nurse educator student, or you can have two options to become a family nurse practitioner. One at the level of the masters and one at the level of a doctorate.

**David Ludlam:** Okay.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Great, and so as we're talking about these terms, obviously you guys are involved in this world day in and day out. But maybe for those listening that aren't as familiar with health science as a whole or all of these different terms that we're using, can you maybe let us know, what is a family nurse practitioner? And maybe what is the difference between a family nurse practitioner and a doctor?

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** Oh, so a family nurse practitioner receives high training in an education in didactic content and clinical content. To care for people across the life span. And usually our

program is geared more towards the outpatient levels. So, these are nurses, already prepared nurses who come for additional training at the advanced level. Once you are certified, you can do similar things to physicians in that you prescribe medicine, evaluate and assess patients for chronic and health care conditions. But, what's unique to nurse practitioners is we come from a nursing paradigm, so we have a different view of the patient including holistic. But we have practice in education on behavior change education and partnering with patients to care for their health.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Right, that makes a lot of sense there when you explain it that way.

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** A lot of people think that they are seeing a physician sometimes and don't realize they're seeing a nurse practitioner. Have you ever had that experience?

**Katlin Birdsall:** I haven't personally been now that you're mentioning it. I'm like, I probably have and I just probably didn't even know.

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** A lot of times people don't know.

**David Ludlam:** Well I did kind of have that experience recently but it was with a physician's assistant.

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** Mhmm.

**David Ludlam:** I was there and I thought maybe that was the nurse. If you're not in the medical field it's kind of confusing.

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** We all blend in.

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** It's all about the patients, really.

**David Ludlam:** What's the difference between the physician's assistant program and the family nurse practitioner program? Kind of what are the differences? I know it's obvious to you but if you're not...

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** Well, I think it's important to remember that nursing as a discipline is very process oriented. And if you think about the term "to nurse", it's actually an action verb that is sort of what you do. It's a very hands-on kind of active component to kind of the health care equation. And medicine, and pharmacy, and social work, and dietary and all of that is very content-driven. And usually when you're looking at physicians and physician's assistants who are both under the medical model, they are very content driven. And nursing, at the advanced practice level, our point of reference is still process. We are still the action verb in the sentence as we see it and as we deliver care. But, as advanced practice nurses, sort of our scope becomes broader than process and starts to involve more content so that we have more autonomy about the types of care we choose to deliver even though we're still focusing on delivery of care.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Okay.

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** If that makes any sense.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Mhmm.

**David Ludlam:** Mhmm.

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** So the difference between a nurse practitioner and a physician assistant is that physician assistants weren't first nurses. So they're not as process-driven even though they do have processes. Just like nurses are very process-driven but we also still have content. So I don't mean that in a pure sense, but just in sort of our point of reference of our world view, we start with the process.

**David Ludlam:** Gotcha.

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** And then physician assistants are licensed by the board of medicine and they usually have to work in conjunction with or under a physician scope of practice.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Mhmm.

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** So that they're always sort of connected to that physician collaborator. Nurse practitioners, because we are from nursing, we are licensed by the board of nursing, not the board of medicine. And we do not require that kind of physician collaborator. We of course collaborate with anybody and everybody that we need to collaborate with for the benefit of the patient. But we aren't kind of tied to that one collaborative provider that kind of shepherds us through our practice.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Okay. Dr. Marshall is there something you wanted to add?

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** Oh I was just going to say that if you want to think of it as a verb, nursing is actually a verb and a noun. And for the audience that's listening, whereas physicianing isn't really a word. And so when we talk about process, we are talking about that we have that skill set to kind of deal with all of the hubs in the spoke of the cycle. And that's because our background encompasses all of those different areas.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Great. Well you are listening to CMU now on KAFM community affairs, and our second guests today are co-coordinators of the graduate nursing program. Dr. Kathleen Hall and Dr. Bridget Marshall.

**David Ludlam:** So, I've got a question, I'll lead with something kind of personal. When I think back to the nursing care that my wife and I received during the birth of our child, as well as the nursing care that I recall at the death of my grandparents, which I was present for both, you know it almost brings me to tears thinking about the type of care that we received from the nursing staff. That stands out at me in a way that I don't even remember the physicians that

were there, I remember the nurses. What is it about being a nurse that makes you know, your education and your practice unique in that way?

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** We come from a theoretical framework and a body of knowledge that's unique to our discipline. So we actually have PhD's in nursing and DNP's which is the clinical component. But it's not just caring, if it was just caring, anybody could do it, right?

**Katlin Birdsall:** Mhmm.

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** And I'm glad you had that wonderful experience, and I'm so excited about that. But at the same time, as nurses, we have to have foundations and understanding of what our counterparts in medicine are also doing and how to evaluate that. Even as a licensed registered nurse, we still work under our own license. So we are actually accountable to ourselves and our profession and our theory. You want to add anything Kathleen?

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** Well, I think of, you know, I'm sure if you talk to a hundred nurse faculty, you will get a hundred answers. But, when I think about my role as an advanced practice nurse, or a nurse in general, I think of myself as the catalyst to the healthcare experience. And my job is to catalyze the process of health promotion or health improvement, or ending of life or whatever for the better. And so if you think about it, the patient is the expert in their life, and my job is to catalyze their health process for the better. And so if you think about yourself, when I come to any kind of setting or circumstance, I think, "How am I going to catalyze this process?" Because the patient is always the expert, I am not the expert in their life, they're the expert in their life. And my job is to catalyze their process within a complex health system which is where a lot of the evidence-based practice and pharmacology and interdisciplinary care and all of those you know, pieces that are higher level concepts for you know, just kind of a caregiver, who's the caregiver.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Mhmm.

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** Because I'm sure they're trying to catalyze the process for the better too. But the professional nurse comes in and has to understand the complexities of all of the different levels of care as they're catalyzing that process for the better.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Alright, so we are already coming to the end of our time today. But before we let you go, I do have one more question for you. So, kind of circling back to the programs that CMU offers for the nurse practitioner, can you explain just kind of one more time, a quick rundown of what we offer at the graduate level for nurse practitioners.

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** Sure! Yeah! I'm happy to do that, I'm glad you asked, because we are really proud of our program. We've done some curriculum changes that visionary people really put forth but now we're refining. And we do still have the masters of sciences in nurse educator. But, what's unique now and new is the masters of science as a family nurse practitioner which allows you to be, it provides you with the didactic training and the clinical training and education to really facilitate care at the outpatient level as of across the life span

and it prepares you to sit for boards of certification. In addition, you can go on and finish your DNP and still be that individual provider while the DNP confers education to deal with systems to really improving systems care, healthcare, at that level so that the nursing student goes from the individual to the systems level. And so we're really excited about our program, MSN FNP, as well as the DNP FNP. So someone can come in at a bachelor's level and go to the DNP FNP. Or someone can come in from the bachelor level and go to the MSN FNP.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Okay, and if somebody who's listening is interested, where's the best place for them to go to find more information on the program, or who should they contact? Kind of maybe a quick rundown on all of that.

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** Well the website at CMU, under graduate studies, you can go to the graduate programs, nursing. And at that site you can find the different graduate level nursing options. And our contact information can be reached on there as program co-coordinators.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Great. Well thank you so much again for taking the time to come on our program we really appreciate it.

**David Ludlam:** Yeah thank you.

**Dr. Bridget Marshall:** Well, thank you!

**Dr. Kathleen Hall:** Thanks for having us.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Yeah. So David before we head on out of here today. I just wanted to discuss maybe a few events that are coming up at CMU or maybe what's happening. I always like to wrap up our show with chatting a little bit about that.

**David Ludlam:** Yeah, let's do it.

**Katlin Birdsall:** So, let's see, what do we got coming up? Okay, so this Saturday we do have a home football game and we are going to be honoring veterans at this home football game. Can you kind of talk to me a little bit about why we're doing that and what people can expect?

**David Ludlam:** Yeah, you know, the president of the University, Tim Foster issued a statement on Veteran's Day acknowledging the more than 400 student veterans that we have on campus. And all of them made a sacrifice to their community and one form or fashion. And so I think the football game coming up is an opportunity for us to acknowledge that. So there's going to be some programming at halftime, and there's going to be some fun stuff on the front-end of the tailgate element of the game. And I think there's going to be a special lunch available free-of-charge to veterans. And people can learn more at CMU now about what that's going to look like.

**Katlin Birdsall:** That's right, and our Student Veteran's Association is heavily involved in that day. I know that they host a tailgate ahead of the game. And they've been really behind our football team this whole year and then this is an extra special game that they get to be a part of as well.

**David Ludlam:** That's right, that's right.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Great, and then also coming up later this month. We have an alumnus that's coming back to campus all the way from Hawaii. Can you talk to us a little bit maybe about the Kalani Pe'a concert that's going to be coming up?

**David Ludlam:** Yeah, you know what stands out at me about this concert is that, you think about the Oscars or the Grammys and sort of in our western culture, that is the pinnacle of artistic expression, acknowledgement of somebody reaching as far as you can go in that artistic discipline. And so, it's really rare that anybody can aspire to get one Grammy, but we have an alumni that actually has received two.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Mhmm.

**David Ludlam:** And when you think about the fact that he received those Grammys just a couple years apart, that's been achieved by almost nobody in U.S history. And he's coming back to give a concert at CMU on the 21<sup>st</sup>, and this is just a rare opportunity for the community to get to see and hear from an artist that has reached the pinnacle of what you can do at least in our country in terms of being acknowledged for that art.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Yeah, I know. I know he has been really excited to come back. He was actually honored at homecoming this past October and I know he's really excited to come back this November. So before we head on out of here is there anything else you think the listeners need to know about what's happening at CMU or WCCC?

**David Ludlam:** You know, I think the CMU civic forum is something that's really of interest of folks. And it's an ongoing effort for us to provide civic engagement opportunities where students in the community can collaborate. And so I think the community should just stay tuned. We are going to be having some interesting things coming up you know during the winter that they can get engaged and with our students that enhance civility and civics in our community which I think in some ways is what university is all about.

**Katlin Birdsall:** And I think that's a great reminder to community members that we're always trying to get community members involved and on campus so a lot of the programming that will be coming is open and usually free to community members too.

**David Ludlam:** That's right, yep.

**Katlin Birdsall:** Great! Well this segment airs on the second Tuesday of each month on KAFM community radio. You can also listen to a podcast of today's show at kafmradio.org. I'm your host Katlin Birdsall along with my co-host David Ludlam, and we'll be back next month for another edition of CMUnow on the community affairs hour.

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