

# NO TRANSLATION NEEDED

by Morgan Collier

Stepping out of comfort zones is not always the easiest thing to do. The faculty and students of the Department of Theatre and Dance are taking their independent spirit across borders by extending

a relationship with Tainan University of Technology in Taiwan.

Golden Wright, department chair and associate professor, along with several students, are working together with the faculty and students at TUT in order to grow in their abilities and experience new styles of dance. In spring 2016, students and faculty from TUT visited the U.S.

"We came up with a plan for them to be here during the week of our spring dance concert," Wright said. "They brought in four faculty members and, with our faculty, we taught combined classes for both our students and the Taiwanese students during their residency here in the U.S." Those classes included a range of different styles of dance, such as jazz, modern, partnering and a Chinese fans class.

"While they were here, I set up a piece of choreography for them, and they brought two pieces themselves that they then performed in our spring concert, 'Dance Unleashed,'" Wright said.

During their time in the states, the group also performed a concert, "Journey of the Mind," where they showcased their culture through dance. At the end of the program, the director asked if the LU Department of Dance and Theatre would like to visit Taiwan.

Wright and six students flew to Taiwan this spring for 16 days to take classes and explore the cities where they performed, Tainan and Kaohsiung. "I taught seven to eight classes," Wright said, "and a former student with a master of arts in dance also taught."

While there, Wright and six LU students performed a different type of piece that employed black light and fluorescent paint. He and one TUT faculty member performed the second piece titled, "The Next Chapter."

"'The Next Chapter' is based on my and my wife's story," Wright said. "I sent a video ahead of time, and the TUT faculty member rehearsed it with one of her students while I rehearsed it with one of my students here, then we had two days to rehearse before it was in front of a live audience."

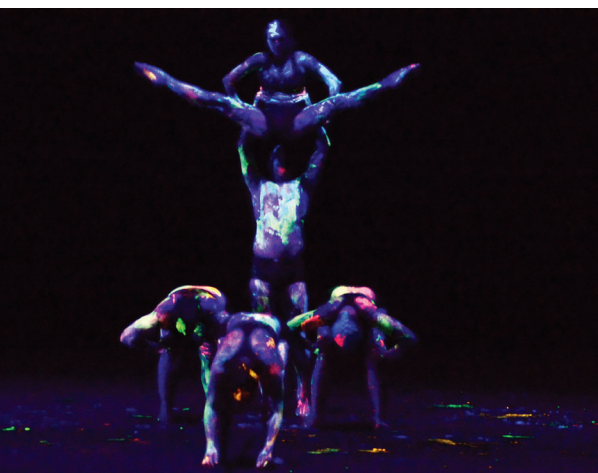
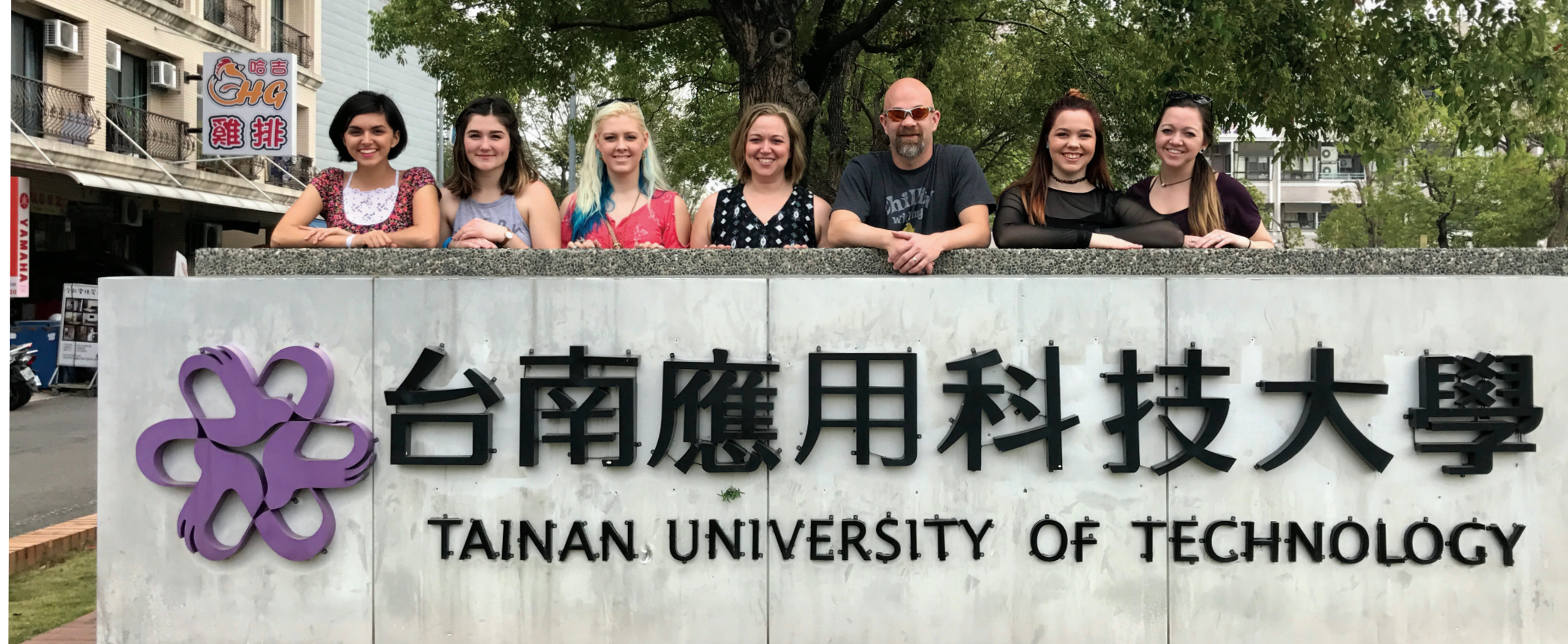
Through the study abroad trip, the LU team had the opportunity to meet the president of TUT along with many others. "This was one of the best

experiences I have had in my life, and for most of the students, it was their first time out of the country, so it was quite the experience," Wright said. "I am beyond thankful for the exceptional relationship we have with Tainan University of Technology."

The most common language spoken in Taiwan is Mandarin, with a unique alphabet. "When you displace a few Americans in a culture they aren't familiar with, it's crazy to see how dance becomes a universal language," Wright said.

Katelyn Kirk, a theatre and dance major from Beaumont, said, "Taiwan is like nothing I have ever experienced before. While visiting, I expanded my knowledge of dance, learned about the culture and created unforgettable memories with my fellow classmates and newly acquired, lifelong friends. I am already looking forward to my next study abroad trip."

According to Wright, the goal for the future is to further grow LU's partnership with Tainan University of Technology and alternate travel to the country every other year. "The first time is always the toughest, but it seems like it gets easier each time," he said. "We want to continue this rotation to form a lasting friendship between the two universities."



PHOTOS BY SANDY OUYANG



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