

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

External Consultant Report

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Introduction

I wish to express my gratitude for the most gracious hospitality received during my visit to California State University Sacramento. The cordial and open visits with Associate Vice President and Dean of Academic Program Dr. Mike Lee and Dean of Arts and Letters Dr. Jeffrey Mason were informative and greatly appreciated. Special thanks are extended to Music Department Chair Dr. Ernie Hills, the campus review team including Dr. Jonathan Porteus and Dr. Hiliry Harvey chaired by Dr. Jackie Donath, and the music faculty and staff for their warm hospitality and coordination of activities during the visit. Everyone's openness and warmth, including that of the students, helped make this visit an enjoyable experience.

Any omission of responses to CSU Sacramento's *Guidelines for External Consultant's Report* for this program review is unintentional and/or relevant materials were unavailable to me during the site visit and subsequent writing of this report.

Commendations

The department is to be commended for having successfully resolved most of the issues raised during its *Program Review of Spring 1999*. In addition, the department is to be commended for the outstanding job it does in providing majors and other university students with quality instruction, a variety of opportunities to develop artistic and intellectual skills, and for creating a teaching environment conducive to student learning and faculty productivity. Specific strengths of the department are:

1. Highly qualified faculty committed to the success of their students, current in their area of expertise, and actively engaged in scholarly research and publication as well as artistic presentations in local, regional, national and international venues. The discussion of gender and ethnic balances in the arts invariably tends to give way to more important matters of artistic and/or scholarly accomplishment in addition to possession of appropriate credentials and experiences for the position. It is in the best interest of the department to offer positions to the most highly qualified applicants regardless of their gender or ethnicity. While at present the faculty composition does not reflect the gender and ethnic demographics of its region, its balance between the two considerations are likely more reflective of its candidate pool.
2. Successful National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) accreditation review that approved renewal of Final Approvals for the Bachelor of Arts in Music, the Bachelor of Music in Performance, the Bachelor of Music in Theory/Composition, the Master of Music in Composition, the Master of Music in Conducting, and the Master of Music in Performance. Plan Approval was granted for the Master of Music degrees in Music History and Literature and Music Education, Bachelor of Music degrees in Music Education and Jazz Studies, the Bachelor of Music in Music Management, and the Performer's Certificate. NASM's approval of degree plans certifies that curricular structures for the department's various degree plans meet

national standards and that the department's human, physical, and financial resources and institutional support are sufficient to deliver those curriculae.

3. Vibrant guest artist series including the New Millennium Concert Series and the Festival of New American Music. These programs enhance student learning through exposures to and contact with world-class artists and composers. At the same time these provide stimulating and innovative high caliber performances to the region's musical community.
4. Talented and dedicated students who have a strong sense of community in the program and within their respective areas of study.
5. Comprehensive Assessment Plan.
6. Strong advising program for entering students.
7. Successful hiring of an ethnomusicologist.
8. Clearly articulated learning outcomes for GE courses consistent with campus policy.
9. Freshman and Transfer Student retention rates within .10 of the University average.
10. Faculty accessibility to students for career/professional advising and mentoring.
11. Strong cohort of graduate students who share a strong sense of community with each other and with their faculty.
12. A healthy and respectable SFR between 12.2 and 13.9 given the nature of the discipline that is heavily dependent in one-on-one instruction and class sizes under 25 students.
13. Mostly clear publications and advising materials outlining degree and program requirements.
14. Up-to-date articulation agreements with regional community colleges.
15. Excellent and clearly defined Department ARTP Policies and Procedures document.
16. Excellent and newly renovated/outfitted Listening Lab with adequate score and sound recording resources for student and faculty use.
17. Adequate University Library resources including a CD collection recently moved from the department and an extensive web sound recording database, The Classical Music Library.

18. Substantial offerings of service courses to support GE and Liberal Studies that typically generates over half (274 in AY 05-06 and 297 in AY 04-05) of the department's average annualized FTE of 450 for the past two years. This balance between the department's major and service courses clearly demonstrates its responsiveness and sensitivity to generating resources to help sustain the more expensive course delivery modes.
19. Clearly articulated Mission Statement.
20. Healthy major enrollments in both undergraduate and graduate programs.

Recommendations for improvement:

1. The department should follow through with its stated intention to revise it's advising materials to reflect accurate program requirements.

In it's *Responses to the Program Review Report* of Spring 2001, the department stated:

“Beginning in Fall 2001, the department's advising materials will be revised to include two methods for completing a Concert Attendance Requirement. One option will be for students to enroll in MUSC 100. The other option will provide a procedure for students to report their concert attendance with their applied professor. This option will not require the student to enroll in an additional unit.”

The catalog does not include 8 units of MUSC 100 in the total unit count for the degree. Instead, the advising notes states “Each music major is required to attend a minimum of 10 concerts and/or recitals each semester. MUSC 100 meets this requirement.” The department's advising sheet lists “Required Additional Units (8 units) of MUSC 100.” There still exists an apparent contradiction between degree requirements as presented in the catalog copy and the advising materials.

2. The department should now begin to implement the next stage of its Assessment Plan that can include the following steps:
 - A. Align program goals with course goals and develop learning outcomes to achieve program goals. A sample review of major course syllabi revealed that these were highly individualized and inconsistent in listing learning outcomes. Some listed Primary Program Goals and some listed course goals of the instructor.
 - B. The department should develop clearly articulated direct measures of student learning. It is in the nature and history of the discipline that there exist numerous direct measures of student learning such as Keyboard Proficiency Examinations, Aural Theory Barrier Examinations, Juries, Junior Qualifying Auditions,

Junior/Senior Recital Permissions and the culminating experience itself, the Senior/Graduate Recital. In this context the department appears to exceed the campus' assessment requirements. There are forms that document these assessments and serve as records of date of performance and repertoire studied with space for subjective comment that determines passing or failure. But these forms do not serve as direct measures of student learning.

Objective evaluation of artistic performances may appear at first to be difficult to articulate and it is indeed a difficult task for music faculty to break down what we all agree to be a holistic assessment into separate parts precisely because the listener's reaction to performances very often are greater than the sum of their parts. However, it is not too arduous a task to articulate those very details musicians methodically use and teach toward achieving artistic expression. Indeed no musician will argue that it is the degree of mastery of these technical considerations that determines the overall degree of artistic success. From here it is simply a matter of articulating the particular techniques and skills taught in order to provide a basis for objective and direct assessment that can inform artistic success. Attached please find copies of sample assessment instruments developed by the Department of Music at California State University Fresno for these purposes.

- C. The department should include program goals, competencies, and assessment procedures for its graduate program in its *Assessment Plan*. Assessment of the department's graduate program is noticeably absent from all the documents submitted for review.
- D. Consider revising the *Alumni Survey* or develop a more informative indirect measure of student learning. The only assessment data produced so far is from an indirect assessment tool, the *Alumni Survey* of 2005. As such the Survey does inform the department about how good of job alumni *thinks* it is doing in meeting its program goals. However, question no. 4 of the Survey asks alumni to agree or disagree as to whether or not the student participated in an ensemble experience throughout the baccalaureate program. This indicates that the data collected from this survey may be flawed if graduate alumni were included. Moreover, the question itself may or may not mean anything to the department because semesterly ensemble experience is a curricular requirement. This question is like asking alumni whether or not they agree or disagree with having fulfilled all course requirements for the degree. An indirect measure of student learning should seek to gather information about how successful the program met the stated Primary Program Goals and Student Competencies of the department's Assessment Plan as it relates to how well students felt they were *prepared* for their professional or academic careers following graduation.
- E. Develop an assessment matrix of writing standards appropriate to the scholarly requirements of the major. The *Self Study* states that there is no writing

standards in the major (p.12) and the Chair confirmed in his meeting with the review team that the department had not yet been able to address this issue.

3. Explore potential for offering more course choices to Graduate Students consistent with concentration course listings in the catalog. Graduate students who met with the review team expressed a desire to have more course choices in their concentrations. They stated that they were limited to taking whichever course was scheduled in any given semester. The catalog does give the impression that students have various course options.
4. Improve academic advising for returning students to better effect graduation rates and time to graduation. An analysis of median graduation rates in this department for the years 1994-2003 indicate a comparably lower graduation rate (.06) within five years as compared to the University average of .19. The graduation rate improves to .21 for the department at 8 years, but is still out of comfortable range from the University graduation rate of .38. Transfer student graduation rates are at .10 of the University at 3 years and are the most aligned (.32) to the University rate of .38 at 6 years. 52 students in the BM degree plan have an unidentified concentration. Another obvious factor that may contribute to the comparatively low graduation rate is the high unit count for the degree compounded by hidden units (MUSC 100 and MUSC 14 A-C), which is all the more reason why students would benefit from a more structured advising system to help guide them through timely completion of the degree.

Undergraduate students related that academic advising was “hit and miss,” and the graduate students echoed their statement. Many students complained that it was difficult to schedule appointments with the Department’s Admissions Counselor for academic advising and when appointments were scheduled, the counselor was often absent.

The *Self Study* states that the 2003 SNAPS survey indicates that students rate major faculty as the most important resource for academic advising. However, the students attending the meeting with the review team did not give the review team the impression that this was the case. Graduate students stated that they were left to their own devices for seeking academic advising and for filing appropriate forms and clearances with the Office of Graduate Studies. The Department’s website states that students are assigned to an applied instructor for advising, but students did not communicate to the review team that this was in fact a practice in the department. Information about progress through the department’s degree plans are clearly stated on its website, but students did not indicate that they know about this resource, nor were graduate students aware of a graduate student handbook that the website states is available upon request in the department office. There is an exemplary Student Teachers Guidelines Handbook available through the department website.

5. Explore the possibility of consolidating areas taught by part-time faculty into one or more full-time lectureships or tenure-track positions. According to the self-study there is an approximate 1:1 ratio between full-time and part-time faculty. While this

ratio may provide the flexibility to enhance the department's ability to support its various program offerings, it may pose difficulties in terms of the department's capacity to participate in faculty governance at levels beyond the department and in reaching consensus on matters important to the department.

6. Have more regular faculty meetings or schedule longer meeting times. Part-time and full-time faculty who attended meetings with the review team stated that they were regular participants in the governance of the department. However, there was some concern expressed about the frequency of department meetings. Some faculty members felt that a one-hour department meeting per month wasn't sufficient for them to address more substantive issues.
7. Encourage faculty to be more engaged with university governance. Outside of the requisite department representative to the Faculty Senate, no evidence was provided to indicate that the department was actively involved in the governance of the university. Some faculty expressed concern that the university as a whole, particularly upper administration, was unaware of the excellence of this program. One way to begin enhancing visibility for the program on campus is for its faculty to participate more fully in university governance thereby giving voice to its concerns and adding its voice to the policy-making process at the university and college levels.
8. Seek Athletic Program support for the Marching Band. The sole function of a university Marching Band and its ancillary units such as Pep Band are to support and enhance the campus' athletic program. In the vast majority of institutions across the nation, the Marching Band is at the very least partially subsidized, if not substantially subsidized by athletics.
9. Explore ways to improve operational efficiency and productivity and improve working relationships between faculty and staff. The meeting with the department's seven staff employees revealed problems with procedures for admission to the major and a confusion about who is responsible for addressing the department's computer and computer-related technology issues. Some staff members related that it is becoming more difficult to meet the increasing demands of the department in a timely way. Friction exists between faculty and the staff member who is in charge of scheduling venues/development of promotional materials, as well as with the staff member who is in charge of audio and visual recording/instructional technology. The source of this friction may stem from faculty not fully informed or cognizant of staff workload and in the case of one staff member, the very real need for a flexible adjusted work schedule. In general staff members felt that faculty were insensitive to the amount of work they perform and felt unappreciated for services they provide. Staff related that they once had regular staff meetings, but this practice has been abandoned.
10. Develop a department vision supported by long-range planning. Faculty complained about a lack of scholarship monies, financial resources to enhance and support instructionally related activities, a perceived lack of collegial and administrative

support, and a lack of collaborative recruitment efforts. The department currently services a total of 186 undergraduate majors and 30 graduate majors with no students declaring Jazz Studies as a concentration. Major enrollment is comparable to other music departments in the CSU System and at institutions of comparable size in the nation. Distribution of graduate students among the concentrations was not provided so I cannot offer commentary on the graduate student distribution.

Even though the Dean expresses support of the program's mission, there is a real possibility of a hefty reduction in the College's allocation. I encourage the department to plan and articulate a vision for what it wants to accomplish in the next five to ten years. Consider whether or not the department will be able to effectively deliver all aspects of that vision given current or reduced funding levels. If additional resources are needed to reach that vision, from where will these come? Is the department willing to exchange some elements of its program to support other elements of the program in order to achieve its vision? What internal measures will be employed to reach its vision? How will it collaborate with other campus units to achieve its vision? Potential outcomes for reaching the department's vision can include a.) a department faculty handbook outlining its policies, procedures, and governance structure, b.) an equipment and facilities maintenance and replacement plan, c.) a development plan, and d.) a student recruitment plan.

Final Thoughts

This department has a strong curricular program that meets national accreditation standards. It appears to have adequate institutional support for delivery of the various degree programs for which NASM has approved. The department is to be congratulated for its many accomplishments to date and is strongly encouraged to look within its current governance and operational structure for opportunities to repair and/or strengthen weaknesses there. Moreover, a well-conceived plan for achieving the next stage of excellence driven by a clearly articulated vision to which all the department's constituents subscribe will help keep the department focused toward achieving its goals.

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date

attachments