Learning Outcomes Data Report

Bachelor of Music
Theory/Composition Concentration

Department of Music

Fall, 2011 enrollment - 18
Report completed by Ernie M. Hills and Robin Fisher
January 25, 2012

Forward

The Bachelor of Music is considered to be the professional degree in our field. Students who complete this program are held to high standards. Regarding the purpose of the Bachelor of Music, the National Association of Schools of Music states:

Students enrolled in professional undergraduate degrees in music are expected to develop the knowledge, skills, concepts, and sensitivities essential to the professional life of the musician. To fulfill various professional responsibilities, the musician must exhibit not only technical competence, but also broad knowledge of music and music literature, the ability to integrate musical knowledge and skills, sensitivity to musical styles, and an insight into the role of music in intellectual and cultural life.

NASM Handbook, VIII, A, 2 (page 99)

1. Learning-outcomes trajectory
In recent years, we have moved away from focusing our assessment reports on individual classes and toward a focus on the learning outcomes for the entire program. This shift became most noticeable about a year ago when we wrote our first draft of learning outcomes for the Bachelor of Arts in Music program. Those were contained in our Assessment Report submitted in June 2011. Since then, learning outcomes have been revised and expanded to address the needs of all of our undergraduate degree programs, including this one.

2. Learning Outcomes (each are important, so they are not prioritized)

Create high-quality original works of composition demonstrating an awareness of and sensitivity to the wide variety of styles and approaches found in the music of our time.

The study of musical composition must produce individuals who can write compelling music that go beyond the derivative. As such, students spend much effort developing an original voice within an awareness of the works of others. Through these efforts, composers develop into true creative artists.

Perform at an advanced level on his/her instrument showing outstanding technical achievement in solo performance, musical accuracy, knowledge of style, and informed historical performance practice.
As students pursuing a program in music performance, students are held to high achievement on a primary instrument or voice such that they may be considered worthy of professional performance upon graduation. Students frequently demonstrate their achievement as a soloist and as a member of large and small ensembles. Through all performances, students demonstrate the integrated knowledge of style and historically accurate performance practices.

**Show skills in planning and executing compositional projects that include in-depth knowledge of instruments and voices, facility with music notation, score layout, with the ability to transcribe sonic ideas from their imaginations to the written page.**

Without substantial skills in music theory, orchestration, and formal analyses, composers have no way to convey their creative ideas; modern music is so complex, it requires extremely fine skills of notation. Students develop these skills in both academic and applied music courses and through a plethora of informal methods.

**Speak and write on a sophisticated level about music reflecting a knowledge of repertoire, major styles, genres, forms and composers from the middle ages to the present.**

Music from different style periods, genres, composers, and cultures must be dealt with using the knowledge of place and time. It is through the study of music history, theory, literature, and performance practice that students develop the ability to place individual works within the context of place and time. Understanding about the course of artistic history and stylistic development informs all aspects of music performance and inquiry. The ability to speak and write within the discipline is essential for the student to demonstrate their knowledge and to pass knowledge along to others.

**Show the ability to articulate their artistic intentions and both give and receive constructive criticism of musical works.**

Students must achieve a synthesis of understanding and the ability to think clearly and articulate those thoughts in order to work effectively in a collaborative environment with other musicians, to lead an ensemble, or to teach other musicians. This is especially true with composers who must defend their artistic decisions and convey them to performers and audience members.

3. **Alignment with the Baccalaureate Learning Goals**

*Competence in the Discipline* is clearly articulated in each of the learning outcomes above. Music students must be able to demonstrate through performance, analysis, writing, and speaking the competencies contained within the study of music performance.

The program develops *Knowledge of Human Cultures* through the study of historical context for each musical work encountered. This often includes a study of other arts,
languages, and socio-political backgrounds. Although the sciences are not encountered directly through our program, students gain significant practical knowledge of the Physical and Natural World as it is expressed through varied acoustical environments and through their pursuit of musical perfection.

*Intellectual and Practical Skills* are found throughout the program. Each musical work encountered is approached through inquiry and analysis that is designed to lead to critical and creative thinking. Communication skills are essential tools for articulating musical concepts and artistic achievement. The ensemble performance experience requires strong teamwork and problem solving skills. The pursuit of music is carefully constructed toward the accumulation of progressively more challenging works and group performances are always project-oriented activities.

The development of *Personal and Social Responsibility* is an important touchstone of all music study. Student must take personal responsibility for the development of their performance and musicianship skills and must demonstrate those skills on a regular basis. The role that each musician plays within a larger ensemble requires the social responsibility of a team; each musician must carry his/her part for the benefit of the group. Performance before live audiences develop a sense of civic engagement that is often linked with intercultural knowledge and understanding. All of these form the foundations and skills for lifelong learning through involvement with diverse communities and real-world challenges.

*Integrative Learning* is required for students to synthesize the enormous canon of music and to use that knowledge to demonstrate advanced accomplishment in our field. Because of each student’s involvement in general education, the program encourages development of understandings of the world beyond music and the use of that knowledge to inform their musical work. Though this, we believe that our students become more than well-rounded musicians; they become well-rounded individuals.

4. Monitoring Learning Outcomes

Create high-quality original works of composition demonstrating an awareness of and sensitivity to the wide variety of styles and approaches found in the music of our time.

Early compositions are first required in the Introduction to Composition course. Student must create three works to develop a portfolio adequate to be admitted to the B.M. Theory/Composition program. Through both group and private instruction, student progress in this outcome is monitored and assessed. Students who achieve at the required level amass enough individual works to present a Senior Recital (capstone) presentation of compositions. These assessments are required of each student admitted to the program.

The initial portfolio is evaluated by two faculty who teach in the area prior to admission to the program. Each semester, composition students and faculty meet to review each others works and to assess progress. The Senior Recital and other
student composition performances are recorded and archived in the department's Listening Lab.

**Show skills in planning and executing compositional projects that include in-depth knowledge of instruments and voices, facility with music notation, score layout, with the ability to transcribe sonic ideas from their imaginations to the written page.**

These skills are obtained through a rigorous sequence of lower-division courses in music theory and musicianship and from upper-division courses providing the in-depth study of counterpoint, the analysis of traditional musical forms, the analysis of contemporary music, and orchestration. The courses are sequential in nature; early courses provide fundamental knowledge leading to the upper division courses that focus on independent skills and analytical inquiry of specific scores. The skills specifically associated with composition are monitored through group and individual composition instruction.

Students who are unable to achieve at the level expected in the outcome are not allowed to continue. Therefore, achievement through the Senior Recital signifies that the student is appropriately fluent in these ways.

**Speak and write on a sophisticated level about music reflecting a knowledge of repertoire, major styles, genres, forms and composers from the middle ages to the present.**

This learning outcome is monitored through five required courses in world music, music literature, and music history. The sequence of course moves from fundamental knowledge to complex, in-depth study.

Each student in the program must take this series of courses. Assessments given in the courses focus on broadening knowledge of common repertoire, deepening understandings of the ways in which music intersects with life around it, and the practice of analytical and creative approaches to the study of music.

A copy of the final exam for MUSC 10B is attached to this document. You can see that it focuses on aural identification of musical examples such that the student must place the work within its historical context and identify specific compositional attributes. Additionally, students must show understanding of specific compositional movements and identify works from a score sample without the benefit of aural playback.

A research paper is the culminating project for MUSC 110B; a faculty committee reviews these papers to gauge achievement of the learning goal.

**Show the ability to articulate their artistic intentions and both give and receive constructive criticism of musical works.**

This outcome is pervasive in all aspects of the composition program. Faculty monitor each student’s ability to express themselves in lessons, repertoire classes, ensembles, and all academic courses. Faculty in the program are encouraged to
confer about individual student progress and to help shore up deficiencies that may be identified.

Although there has not been a formal assessment of this outcome, faculty discuss student progress in this area and consider our graduating students to be quite competent on the whole. Further evidence for this is seen in formal writing projects for upper-division courses and in program notes submitted with the Senior Recital.

5. Outcomes used to address the curriculum

Small revisions to the curriculum have occurred due to assessment activities and from external assessments from of our national accrediting body, the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM). During our recent accreditation visit (October 2011), the program was commended for its high standards demonstrated in individual and ensemble performance and for adherence to the academic competencies associated with the performance degree.

According to NASM standards, the program minimally provides an appropriate percentage of courses in the major area and supportive courses in music. Any additions to that part of the major curriculum are blocked by the University's considerable general education requirements and our desire to not let the total degree requirements exceed 129. Should the GE requirements diminish, we would consider the addition of specialize coursework in electronic music and film scoring.

6. Data from alumni

Alumni surveys have been used in conjunction with on-campus program reviews. Data from the surveys have been analyzed and curricular changes have resulted. Overall, alumni seem quite satisfied with their programs rating their experiences in the performance realm highest, followed by music history, music theory, and musicianship.

Alumni surveys and other alumni feedback have resulted in changes to the keyboard proficiency requirements as the standards were deemed unnecessarily difficult. Alumni feedback was greatly responsible for the addition of jazz studies to the department's offerings and revisions to music education coursework.

7. Learning outcomes and accreditation

As a fully accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Music, each program must adhere to “standards” and “competencies” as published in the NASM Handbook. For this program, the Handbook states:

Performance. Students must acquire:

a. Technical skills requisite for artistic self-expression in at least one major performance area at a level appropriate for the particular music concentration.

b. An overview understanding of the repertory in their major performance area and the ability to perform from a cross-section of that repertory.

c. The ability to read at sight with fluency demonstrating both general musicianship and, in the major performance area, a level of skill relevant to professional standards.
appropriate for the particular music concentration.
d. Knowledge and skills sufficient to work as a leader and in collaboration on matters of
musical interpretation. Rehearsal and conducting skills are required as appropriate to the
particular music concentration.
e. Keyboard competency.
f. Growth in artistry, technical skills, collaborative competence and knowledge of
repertory through regular ensemble experiences. Ensembles should be varied both in
size and nature.
Normally, performance study and ensemble experience continue throughout the
baccalaureate program.

**Musicianship Skills and Analysis.** Students must acquire:
a. An understanding of the common elements and organizational patterns of music and
their interaction, the ability to employ this understanding in aural, verbal, and visual
analyses, and the ability to take aural dictation.
b. Sufficient understanding of and capability with musical forms, processes, and
structures to use this knowledge and skill in compositional, performance, analytical,
scholarly, and pedagogical applications according to the requisites of their
specializations.
c. The ability to place music in historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts.

**Composition/Improvisation.** Students must acquire a rudimentary capacity to create
original or derivative music. It is the prerogative of each institution to develop specific
requirements regarding written, electronic, or improvisatory forms and methods. These
may include but are not limited to the creation of original compositions or improvisations,
variations or improvisations on existing materials, experimentation with various sound
sources, the imitation of musical styles, and manipulating the common elements in non-
traditional ways. Institutional requirements should help students gain a basic
understanding of how to work freely and cogently with musical materials in various
composition-based activities, particularly those most associated with the major field.

**History and Repertory.** Students must acquire basic knowledge of music history and
repertories through the present time, including study and experience of musical language
and achievement in addition to that of the primary culture encompassing the area of
specialization (see Section III.L.).

**Synthesis.** While synthesis is a lifetime process, by the end of undergraduate study
students must be able to work on musical problems by combining, as appropriate to the
issue, their capabilities in performance; aural, verbal, and visual analysis;
composition/improvisation; and history and repertory.

In addition, NASM adds these competencies specifically for the program in
composition:

a. Achievement of the highest possible level of skill in the use of basic concepts, tools,
techniques, and procedures to develop a composition from concept to finished product.
This involves the competency to work with both electronic and acoustic media; work with
a variety of forms, styles, and notations; and apply principles of scoring appropriate to
particular compositions.
b. Fluency in the use of tools needed by composers. This includes keyboard skills,
spoken and written language, conducting and rehearsal skills, analytical techniques, and
applicable technologies.
c. Opportunities to hear fully realized performances of the student’s original compositions.
Public presentation and critical assessment is an essential experience.
By comparing these to the learning outcomes specified for this program, one can see there is careful alignment between our campus goals and those set forth by our accrediting agency.

8. A final word

We appreciate your interest in this program and desire to understand the unique educational goals associated with programs in music. If there are aspects of this document that are unclear, please contact us for clarification.

Attachments:

- Learning Outcomes document prepared for College of Arts & Letters showing each learning outcome, the courses in which the learning takes place, and the assessment tools used to evaluate the outcomes. This includes a rubric demonstrating alignment of the Learning Outcomes for this program with the dimensions and learning goals published by the Lumina Foundation http://www.luminafoundation.org/.
College of Arts and Letters Learning Outcomes

Department: **Music**  
Program: **Bachelor of Music, Theory/Composition**

**With a degree in BM Theory/Composition, a student will be able to**

1. Create high-quality original works of composition demonstrating an awareness of and sensitivity to the wide variety of styles and approaches found in the music of our time. He/she will reach this learning objective through the following courses and assessment tools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Assessment Tools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 42</td>
<td>Intro to Composition</td>
<td>Composition projects read through by student and/or faculty performers, evaluated and critiqued by professor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 103</td>
<td>Counterpoint</td>
<td>Written exercises, guided composition projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 105</td>
<td>20\textsuperscript{th} Century Music Theory</td>
<td>Written exams, score analysis, term paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 106</td>
<td>Form &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>Score analysis, term project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 180 A/B</td>
<td>Advanced Counterpoint</td>
<td>Written exercises, guided composition projects in various historical styles (16\textsuperscript{th}-Century, 18\textsuperscript{th}-Century, 20\textsuperscript{th}-Century)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 107A/B</td>
<td>Composition</td>
<td>Individual sessions with composition professor, group critiques, public performances of works created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 177 A/B</td>
<td>Advanced Composition</td>
<td>Individual sessions with composition professor, group critiques, public performances of works created</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 185</td>
<td>Senior Recital (Capstone)</td>
<td>60-min. concert presentation of student’s compositions</td>
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2. Show skills in planning and executing compositional projects that include in-depth knowledge of instruments and voices, facility with music notation, score layout, with the ability to transcribe sonic ideas from their imaginations to the written page. He/she will reach this learning objective through the following courses and assessment tools:

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<tr>
<td>MUSC 5, 6 &amp; 7</td>
<td>Music Theory</td>
<td>Written assignments, part-writing, harmonic analysis, stylistic emulation, exams, each semester with increasing difficulty and complexity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 14D</td>
<td>Keyboard Skills</td>
<td>Final exam testing skills including scales, arpeggios, sight-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **Speak and write on a sophisticated level about music reflecting a knowledge of repertoire, major styles, genres, forms and composers from the middle ages to the present.** He/she will reach this learning objective through the following courses and assessment tools:

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<tr>
<td>MUSC 9</td>
<td>Music in World Cultures</td>
<td>Papers and exams about the role of music and its manifestations in various cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 10A/B</td>
<td>Survey of Music Literature</td>
<td>Emphasis on listening skills and writing about music. Final exams/term papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 110A/B</td>
<td>History of Music</td>
<td>Writing and speaking about music from early Greeks to contemporary using harmonic analysis, aural evaluation and historical context. Final exams/term papers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Show the ability to articulate their artistic intentions and both give and receive constructive criticism of musical works.** He/she will reach this learning objective through the following courses and assessment tools:

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<tr>
<td>MUSC 100 (8 semesters)</td>
<td>Concert Attendance</td>
<td>Experiencing at least 10 concerts per semester on/ off campus and writing brief reviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUSC 107 A/B; 177 A/B</td>
<td>Composition; Advanced Composition</td>
<td>Periodic group presentations of works-in-progress, group critiques by professors and peers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension</td>
<td>Discipline Learning</td>
<td>Integrative Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Remembering</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Able to list historical periods, major composers and stylistic development of music in Western Civilization and other cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Understanding</strong></td>
<td>Recognizes theoretical and historical characteristics of music from the Renaissance to the contemporary era.</td>
<td>Grasps the role of historical and cultural context in western and non-western music’s development and performance</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Applying</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Analyzing</strong></td>
<td>Analyzes &amp; explains theoretical and historical elements in various genres of classical music</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluating</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interacts with composer colleagues in group critiques and discussion of musical ideas and approaches</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Creating</strong></td>
<td>Composes exercises and short pieces within the strictures of various historical style practices</td>
<td>Develops ability to articulate artistic intentions and discuss creative work from both technical and aesthetic perspectives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>